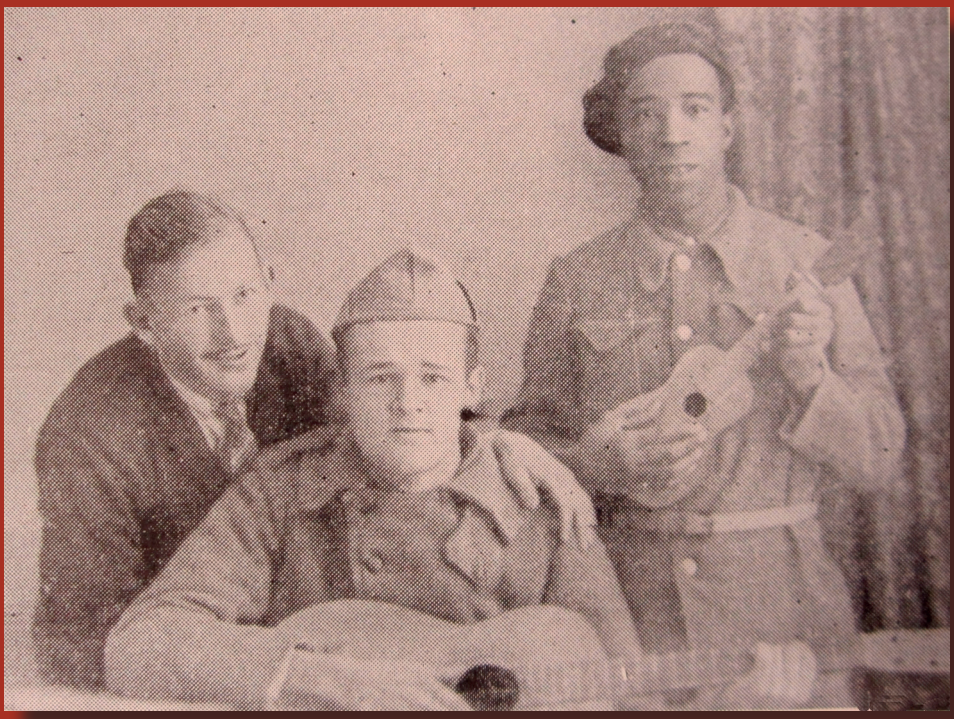

Aleksi Huhta

Toward a Red Melting Pot

The Racial Thinking of Finnish-American Radicals, 1900–1938

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List of Abbreviations

AFL: American Federation of Labor

CPF: Communist Party of Finland

CPUSA: Communist Party of the United States

FSF: Finnish Socialist Federation

FWF: Finnish Workers' Federation

IWW: Industrial Workers of the World

LSU: Labor Sports Union

NKVD: People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (USSR)

SDP: Social Democratic Party of Finland

SPA: Socialist Party of America

WFM: Western Federation of Miners

WPA: Work Progress Administration

List of Illustrations

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Aleksi Huhta

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In its content, this published version of the dissertation is nearly identical to the self-published version from 2017. The only changes concern footnotes: few omitted page numbers have been added and other small errors corrected.

Helsinki, 25.3.2021

Aleksi Huhta

Introduction

Does Red Run in the Body of Every Man?

In July 1907, the Mesabi Iron Range in Northwestern Minnesota was in the throes of a major industrial struggle. Over 10,000 miners refused to work and demanded wage increases and better working conditions. Most of the striking men were immigrants from Finland, Italy and other parts of Europe, and the picket lines were permeated with an internationalist spirit. Speeches were made and leaflets were distributed in several European languages. The strike was led by men with names like Petriella, Mäki, and Kovish, most of whom had only been resident in the country for a few years. When Minnesota's Governor asked a Finnish strike leader to clarify the meaning of the red flag that was so ubiquitous among the miners, the Finn, in reply, offered a distillation of the internationalist ethos of the movement: "The flag is made red because the Socialists are made of all workers. They are not any nation. They only know two kinds of people—the capitalist class and the laboring class. They cannot take a white flag because all men are not white. So they take red, because red is the color that runs in the body of every man."[1]

It soon became apparent, however, that socialists could ill ignore other kinds of divisions between workers. In the midst of the strike, the Oliver Mining Company brought hundreds of strikebreakers to the Range from eastern port cities with the intention of breaking the multinational coalition that was united against it. The strikebreakers were recruited from different nationalities

1 Charles B. Cheney: "A Labor Crisis and a Governor." *The Outlook*, 2.5.1908, p. 27.

than the strikers. Most of the "scabs" were Montenegrins, Croatians and other South Europeans. The internationalist enthusiasm that had been so prominent among the miners in the early weeks of the strike soon turned sour. A Finnish miner from Biwabik, for example, lamented on the pages of a Finnish-language socialist newspaper in late August that "Italians are the lousiest of them all, you cannot get through to them."[2] Indeed, the company's utilization of "the nationality question" against the strikers, as one Finnish writer put it,[3] succeeded in sowing suspicion and bitterness along national lines. The strike was soon defeated, and those who were not blacklisted were forced to return to work.[4]

So, was the Finnish strike leader right to insist that red socialist blood flowed in the body of every man? Were all nationalities and races, Finns just as much as Montenegrins, equally capable of being organized into a working-class movement? And, if they were, how should these non-class divisions, which had such obvious social significance, be taken into account in political and industrial organizations? These conundrums went far beyond the labor strife on the Mesabi Range. They rank as being among some of the thorniest questions that plagued the US left in the early twentieth century. Paul Buhle has even contended that Marxism in the United States was "a class manifestation of the National Question."[5] Adding to these purported problems of working-class diversity were the racial divisions between the white and the black native-born workers. In a society in which the working class was divided into countless linguistic, national, religious and racial groups, these divisions presented a major organizational hurdle.

2 "Minnesotan rauta-alueen lakko." *Työmies*, 28.8.1907.

3 "Italialaisia lakkopettureita." *Työmies*, 17.9.1907.

4 Neil Betten: "Strike on the Mesabi: 1907." *Minnesota History*, Vol. 40, No. 7, 1967, pp. 340–347; Michael G. Karni: "The Founding of the Finnish Socialist Federation and the Minnesota Strike of 1907." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, pp. 73–80.

5 Paul Buhle: *Marxism in the United States: From 1870 to the Present Day.* Verso: London 1987, p. 13.

Indeed, the diversity of the American working class is one of the go-to answers to the much-debated question "why is there no socialism in the United States."[6]

The Left disagreed about how the labor movement should approach these divisions. Some held that a person's capability to take a stand against a company was a racial trait. There were races and nationalities, the argument went, that simply could not be organized and should thus be ignored or even driven out of the country. Others vehemently disagreed. They posited that all workers shared a universal humanity and therefore responded in a similar manner when exposed to industrial capitalism. Moreover, they held that only a truly universal labor movement could ward off the attempts of bosses to use national divisions against workers. These polar positions are, to a great extent, ideal types. In practice, most leftists in the early-1900s in the United States fell somewhere in between.

Historians of the U.S. labor movement have done much to study the Left's troubled relationship with race.[7] We also know much about the nativist contempt with which American labor organizers and socialist activists often viewed the supposedly uncouth masses that were flocking to their country's shores from Asia and the purportedly backward margins of Europe.[8] We know less,

6 Seymour Martin Lipset & Gary Marks: *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*. W. W. Norton & Company: New York 2000, pp. 125, 158–160.

7 See, for example, Philip Foner: *American Socialism and Black Americans: From the Age of Jackson to World War II*. Greenwood Press: Westport, Conn. 1977; Mark Naison: *Communists in Harlem during the Depression*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1983; David R. Roediger: *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working-Class History*. Verso: London 1994; Mark Solomon: *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African-Americans, 1917–1936*. University Press of Mississippi: Oxford 1998; Bruce Nelson: *American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality*. Princeton University Press: Princeton 2001.

8 See, for example, Alexander Saxton: *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. University of California Press: Berkeley 1971; Mark Pittenger: *American Socialists and Evolutionary Thought, 1870–1920*. The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 1993,

however, about what the immigrant leftists thought about America's[9] racial divisions and their significance vis-à-vis labor politics and organization. Too often these immigrants are treated as being merely the targets of the Left's thought or action. They were the "unfit and abnormal classes" that a socialist author like Robert Hunter could lament,[10] or the insular "ethnics" whom the leaders of the U.S. Communist Party accused of harboring parochial racism.[11] The thoughts of non-English-speaking leftists themselves are only rarely considered in regard to questions about such issues as immigrants' assimilability or white chauvinism.[12] Thus, it is often assumed that immigrants had no discernable influence on the Left's broader ideologies or policies. Michael Kazin, for example, has dismissed the wider influence of Finnish-American socialists in the United States: "[T]heir network could have been located in the environs of Helsinki, for all the impression it made on other Americans."[13]

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esp. pp. 167–198; Sally M. Miller: "For White Men Only: The Socialist Party of America and Issues of Gender, Ethnicity, and Race." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* Vol. 2, No. 3, July 2003, pp. 283–302.

9 The synonymous usage of the United States and America has been rightly criticized within American Studies. Equating the United States with America easily erases the other countries of North, Central, and South America. Thus, I mostly refer to the United States with the country's own name, but I also use the term "America." This is because for the subjects of my study, Finnish immigrants, the U.S. and *Amerikka* were indeed synonymous, and they often made no distinction between the terms in their language. While I thus acknowledge the problematic aspects of the synonymous use, and refer mostly to the U.S. when talking about the U.S., I have not completely abandoned the term America or the demonym Americans.

10 Pittenger 1993, p. 172.

11 Solomon 1998, pp. 137–142.

12 On the exclusion of radical voices in the working-class and immigration history more broadly, see Michael Miller Topp: *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists.* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 2001, pp. 16–17.

13 Michael Kazin: *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation.* Alfred A. Knopf: New York 2011, p. 161.

This study examines how Finns, one of the largest immigrant groups within the U. S. Left in the early twentieth century, understood, reproduced and contested racial ideas in the United States. The 389,000 Finns who immigrated to the United States between 1860 and 1924 formed a miniscule element among the thirty million Southern and Eastern European immigrants who arrived in the country in this period.[14] Yet, they were still among the most prominent immigrant groups within leftist movements in the country in the early 1900s.[15] The Finnish Socialist Federation, whose membership peaked at 12,000 in 1912, was the largest of the Socialist Party of America's many language federations. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) had thousands of Finnish members. Indeed, its Finnish-language newspaper, *Industrialisti*, was the only daily publication of the IWW. In the early 1920s, Finns accounted for over forty percent of the membership of the Workers (Communist) Party. Even after the abolition of the party's Finnish language federation in 1925, the party could count on Finns being one of its more loyal constituencies.[16] It was small wonder that the party's long-time postwar leader, Gus Hall (born Arvo Kustaa Halberg), emerged from this Finnish-American radical milieu.[17] This

14 Anna-Leena Toivonen: *Eteläpohjanmaan valtamerentakainen siirtolaisuus 1867–1930.* Historiallisia tutkimuksia julkaissut Suomen Historiallinen Seura LXVI. SHS: Helsinki 1963; Reino Kero: *Migration from Finland to North America in the Years between the United States Civil War and the First World War.* University of Turku: Turku 1974; Keijo Virtanen: *Settlement or Return: Finnish Emigrants (1860–1930) in the International Overseas Return Migration Movement.* The Finnish Historical Society: Helsinki 1979.

15 Lipset & Marks 2000, p. 143. Lipset and Marks note that "By 1914 almost as large a proportion of Finns were Socialists as Socialists were Finns. This is the only immigrant group about which this can be said."

16 Peter Kivisto: *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press: Rutherford 1984, pp. 16–17.

17 Tuomas Savonen: "Between Minnesota Rock and a Hard Place—Matt Hallberg as an Example of Southern Ostrobothnian Immigration to the United States." In Michael S. Beaulieu, Ronald N. Harpelle & Jaimi Penney

study focuses on the time period during which the radicalism of Hall's Finnish parents was shaped: the peak years of a specifically Finnish leftist movement in the United States between circa 1900 and the late 1930s. The analysis begins at the turn of the twentieth century, when the first Finnish socialist associations and newspapers were established in the United States. The end point is 1938, that is, the year before the beginning of the Second World War.

By foregrounding oft-ignored non-English-language sources, this study challenges the well-worn narrative about the immigrant Left's insularity and its purported indifference towards American politics and interethnic interaction. I will illustrate that immigrant radicals had a decidedly outward outlook on the world and that they sought to actively participate in politics outside their immediate ethnic environs. This willingness to engage with the outside world went also beyond the borders of the United States. The immigrant radicals imagined themselves as part of an international movement and viewed issues such as race and nationality from this international perspective. When discussing race, they made comparisons, drew analogies and observed differences that went beyond the American context. Yet, their attempts to go beyond particularism had of course their limits. Their thinking on race, or other issues, was never "universal" or "global" in any true sense, but was informed by the specific limits and closings of their historical environments.[18] The major aim of

(eds.): *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States.* Institute of Migration: Turku 2011, pp. 178–183.

18 On this point more broadly, see Frederick Cooper: "How Global Do We Want Our Intellectual History to Be?" In Samuel Moyn & Andrew Sartori (eds.): *Global Intellectual History.* Columbia University Press: New York 2013, pp. 291–292. Cooper writes: "the question of whether the terms in which certain intellectuals operate is truly 'universal' or 'global' is not the most revealing one historically. The more important problem is to figure out what intellectuals' frameworks were, with their openings and closures, linkages, and dead ends. Unless we give more than a nod to the plurality of universalisms, the time depth of connections, and to the ways in which different frameworks combine and conflict, we will be extending our twenty-first century parochialism."

this study is to examine how radical Finns combined universalistic and particularistic ideas in their attempts to make sense of themselves and others.

Indeed, this study will illustrate that the Finnish immigrants who made sense of human difference did not draw on any established or static body of thought (for example, American racism, Finnish nationalism or socialist internationalism), but made creative connections between different ideas and concepts. Racial ideas did not have a single geographical or ideological origin. They were neither an American acquisition nor a European carry over. No single doctrine explains why or how immigrant radicals believed in races. Rather, racial thinking was formed in a cross-border and multi-vocal process, where actors drew on influences from different geographical and intellectual contexts. The title of this study aims to capture the spirit of this intellectual mixing and promiscuity. For the radical immigrants of this study, the "American" concept of the melting pot could well be invested with a socialist meaning.

Race and Nation in Cross-Border Context

Race Beyond U.S. Racism

In American antiracist writing, racism is often depicted as a particularly American sin. Race is viewed as a fiction which was created by European settlers to justify their colonization of Native American lands and the enslavement of Africans. Thus, it is often held that newcomers to America learned to think in racial terms only upon their arrival to the United States. James Baldwin, for example, once observed that "No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this came a white country."[19] More recently, Ta-Ne-

19 James Baldwin: "On Being 'White'… And Other Lies." In David Roediger (ed.): *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to Be White.* Schocken Books: New York 1998, p. 178. As Roediger (2005, p. 104) notes, the Af-

hisi Coates has made much the same point: "race is the child of racism, not the father." Coates notes that European immigrants to America learned to view themselves as whites only by endorsing "the belief in the preeminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize society and that they signify deeper attributes, which are indelible."[20]

Similar understanding about race as a derivative of racism has informed much of the academic scholarship on European immigrants and whiteness. Historians who have examined the construction of whiteness among European immigrants have argued that the Irish, Italians, Jews, Slavs and other European immigrants learned to stake political and societal claims in terms of race as they became acquainted with the racialized hierarchies of the U.S. society. The racial learning of immigrants is seen as intimately connected to their broader assimilation. Immigrants learned to identify as white as they applied for citizenship, jobs, promotions, housing and mortgages, participated in politics and business, put their children to schools and enrolled them in universities, conscripted in the army and so on. Since economic, political and cultural resources were to such a significant degree dependent on racial considerations, it made sense for European immigrants to emphasize their whiteness – rather than, for example, their nationality or religion – when they interacted with U.S. institutions. Thus, by the postwar era, intra-white racial divisions between, for example, the Irish, Slavs and Italians, had lost much of their societal significance. At this time, European immigrants and their descendants endorsed a supra-national identity as whites in a discursive environment in which the dichotomous black-white

rican-American comedic tradition has also made much of the greenhorn European, who fresh off the boat learns to denigrate black people as he understands its social benefits in a racist society.

20 Ta-Nehisi Coates: *Between the World and Me.* Spiegel & Grau: New York 2015, p. 7.

division was increasingly replacing the more splintered racial categorizations of the early 1900s.[21]

While historians have disagreed about the exact chronology of immigrant whitening,[22] they have mostly agreed about its close connectedness to Americanization. As Sarah Gualtieri notes: "The tendency […] has been to argue that immigrant attachment to whiteness was inextricably connected to desires to become American."[23] Thus, whether European immigrants became white on arrival or at some time thereafter, it is still widely held that their racial consciousness (whiteness) was formed by the racist social structure around them. They became racial subjects because such subjectivities were associated with cultural status, political power and economic resources in the United States.

This perspective has provided important insights into the connectedness of racial ideas and the distribution of social, economic

21 Noel Ignatiev: *How the Irish Became White?* Harvard University Press: Cambridge 1995; James R. Barrett & David Roediger: "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1997, pp. 3–44; Karen Brodkin: *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America.* Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick: 1998; Matthew Frye Jacobson: *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge 1998; David R. Roediger: *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs.* Basic Books: New York 2005.

22 Some historians have argued that European immigrants did not have to become white since powerful U.S. institutions depicted them as whites already on their arrival. See Thomas Guglielmo: *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003; Eric Kaufmann: "The Dominant Ethnic Moment: Towards the Abolition of 'Whiteness?'" *Ethnicities*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2006, pp. 231–266; Ariela J. Gross: *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass. 2010, pp. 211–252; Cybelle Fox & Thomas A. Guglielmo: "Defining America's Racial Boundaries: Blacks, Mexicans, and European Immigrants, 1890–1945." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 118, No. 2, 2012, pp. 327–379. See also Roediger 2005, pp. 110–119.

23 Gualtieri 2009, p. 5.

and cultural resources. However, like all frameworks for analytical interpretation, the focus on American racism as a catalyst for immigrant racial identifying leaves some aspects of the phenomenon unexamined even as others are illuminated. One such dark spot is the framework's ethnocentrism: it is assumed that racial ideas had currency only in America.[24] Racist stereotypes of non-European peoples, which emerged from or were reinforced by European colonialism from the fifteenth century, circulated widely in the European culture. As recent studies on the "colonial complicity" of the Nordic countries have demonstrated, these racial ideas reached even the northern margins of the continent and influenced the worldviews of the Nordic peoples.[25]

Moreover, as scholars of comparative ethnic studies have argued, racial thinking also has a non-colonial history. All forms of racial thinking have not emerged from contacts between colonizing Europeans and the colonized non-Europeans; there is a long history of racial thought and discrimination also *within* Europe. Anti-Semitism, antiziganism and other forms of racial prejudice and discrimination have existed in Europe prior to and independent from extra-European colonial projects and the transatlantic slave trade.[26] Moreover, the understanding of race as

24 This has been noted by many commentators of the whiteness studies paradigm. See, for example, Peter Kolchin: "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America." *The Journal of American History*. Vol 89, No. 1, 2002, p. 171; Roediger 2005, p. 110.

25 Suvi Keskinen, Salla Tuori, Sari Irni & Diana Mulinari (eds.): *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. Ashgate: Farnham 2011; Kristin Loftsdottír & Lars Jensen: *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities.* Ashgate: Farnham 2012.

26 Francisco Bethencourt: *Racisms: From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2013, pp. 4, 19–36. While premodern anti-Jewish and other forms of intra-European prejudice and discrimination are often depicted as having been religiously motivated, this overlooks the prominent role that ideas of blood and descent had in medieval and early modern European thinking on difference. As Bethencourt (p. 4) notes, "the separation between religious and natural hierarchies is much more blurred than generally acknowledged." On intra-European ra-

a Western concoction ignores the existence of similar intellectual traditions in the non-European world.[27] Thus, what we today call race has been historically and geographically a much more pervasive phenomenon than a mere byproduct of Western colonial modernity. Classification of human beings into groups based on different physical markers, and understanding those physical markers as indicative of deep-rooted mental characteristics, has historical genealogies that cannot be reduced to colonial contacts alone.[28] Indeed, if we define race more broadly as a "general set of assumptions that humankind is divided among constituent categories, each of which is distinguished by inherited traits and characteristics,"[29] it is likely that most, if not all, immigrants to the United States were "race thinkers before coming."[30]

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cial thinking, see, for example, Larry Wolff: *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press: Stanford 1994; Maria Todorova: *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1997. On the roots of racism in European antiquity, see Benjamin Isaac: *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*. Princeton University Press: Princeton 2004. For a criticism of Isaac's interpretation, see Bethencourt 2013, pp. 3–4. As Barbara Fields has noted, the ignoring of the history of intra-European racism leads to the exotization of race, as only relations between European and African-descended people are seen as properly "racial." See Fields 2012, p. 117.

27 Frank Dikötter: *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. Hurst: London 1994; Jonathon Glassman: *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar*. University of Indiana Press: Bloomington 2011; Bruce Hall: *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2013.

28 Some social psychologists and anthropologists have suggested that human beings have an inborn susceptibility to classify other humans into distinct types and attribute to these types common intrinsic features. See, for example, Lawrence A. Hirschfeld: *Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child's Construction of the Human Kinds*. The MIT Press: Cambridge 1996, pp. 11–14 and *passim*.

29 Glassman 2011, p. 10.

30 This apt phrase is from Roediger 2005, p. 110.

Taking seriously the possibility that immigrants were "race thinkers before coming" requires that we take seriously their own agency in constructing racial meanings. The focus on how U.S. structures of racism conditioned the thinking of immigrants can easily crowd out this human agency. Racial structure, rather than the thoughts and actions of racially thinking human beings, becomes the subject of analysis. Historian Barbara Fields has made this point more generally: "If not kept strictly in their place, [categories of analysis, such as race] get above themselves and go masquerading as persons, mingling on equal terms with human beings and sometimes crowding them out altogether."[31] In studying the racial thinking of immigrants, overt focus on the U.S. racial structure can lead to mechanistic analysis where the immigrant racial thinking is seen as a mere response to structural forces. What immigrants themselves said or wrote about race is deemed less consequential and becomes easily sidestepped.

Indeed, in his book on Jewish-American racial identity, Eric Goldstein criticizes studies on immigrant whitening for positing "a fairly uncomplicated embrace of whiteness by immigrant groups" and for downplaying "the way in which other 'racial' identities such as Irishness or Jewishness may have continued to disrupt, confound, or inflect the immigrants' understanding of themselves as white."[32] Similarly, immigration historian David Graber has noted that, despite the long-standing scholarly interest in how European immigrants became white, there is still a dearth of scholarship on how immigrants made sense of race,

31 Barbara J. Fields: "Categories of Analysis? Not in My Book." *Viewpoints: Excerpts from the ACLS Conference in Humanities in the 1990s.* American Council of Learned Societies Occational Paper, No. 10. ACLS: New York 1989. Available online at http://archives.acls.org/op/op10fields.htm. See also Barbara J. Fields: "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the USA." In Karen E. Fields & Barbara J. Fields: *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life.* Verso: London 2012, pp. 119–120.

32 Eric L. Goldstein: *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2006, p. 4.

both as a term for self-identification and as a term to classify others. He notes that we still need studies that ask questions along the following lines: "What do Swedes or Norwegians think of Chinese? Jews or Greeks of Mexicans? Finns or Icelanders of African Americans? What do Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs think of being white?"[33]

Answering these questions requires that we abandon the notion of race as a U.S. exceptionality. While the U.S. practice of classifying racial belonging (for example the "one drop rule" and the remarkable salience of the white-black boundary[34]) was certainly distinctive in many ways, its peculiarity should not be overstressed. Racial ideas were not unfamiliar outside Americas and Western Europe, but had far wider geographical reach. In his study of Slovak immigrants and the idea of race, Robert Zecker has observed that Slovaks had various pre-migration cognitive frameworks to interpret racial difference in America. They could draw on racial theories about intra-European difference, which were popular in European political, scientific and cultural debate, and to racial stereotypes about Jews, Gypsies and Turks. Few of them had probably encountered Africans and Asians—or at least stereotypes about them—in European port cities and cosmopolitan metropolises.[35]

Indeed, in order to understand how immigrants in America thought about race, we must take into account the ways in which human difference in Europe was organized and talked about. Here, it is important to consider the context of empire. The Europe that the nineteenth and early twentieth-century immigrants left behind was a continent of multinational empires; the Europe

33 David A. Gerber: "Immigration Historiography at the Crossroads." *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2011, pp. 83–84.

34 Fox & Guglielmo 2012.

35 Robert Zecker: *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How Slovak Immigrants were Taught to Think Like White People.* Bloomsbury: New York 2013, pp. 50–67.

of nation-states was still decades away.[36] Yet, this imperial context of European immigration is only rarely considered in studies about immigrant ethnic and national identity, or in studies about how immigrants engaged with American ideas of whiteness.[37] Sarah Gualtieri's study on the Syrian-American diaspora illustrates the benefits that are inherent in an approach which examines immigrant connectedness to empire. She examines how Syrian ideas on race and ethnicity were shaped by their background in, and transnational engagement with, the Ottoman Empire. She demonstrates, for example, how the Ottoman discourse on religious difference and the *millet* system informed Syrian notions of whiteness in the United States.[38]

Discourse of Civilization and Finnishness

In recent years, there has been increasing scholarly interest to study the connections of colonialism and imperialism in the Nordic countries, which has important implications for the present study. Scholars drawing on postcolonial theory have argued that the Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland) have not been isolated from global histories of colonialism and imperialism, but have been politically, economically and culturally involved in them.[39] This scholarship has sought to con-

36 As Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper note, empires, not nation-states, were the standard form of state in Europe well into the twentieth century. Jane Burbank & Frederick Cooper: *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2010, pp. 1–2.

37 Peter Kolchin made this point already in 2002. See Kolchin 2002, p. 171.

38 Gualtieri 2009.

39 For studies on Nordic colonization projects, see, for example, Magdalena Naum & Jonas M. Nordin (eds.): *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena.* Springer: New York 2013. For studies on the participation of Nordic peoples to European colonial projects, see, for example, Marika Kivinen: "Bröllopsresa i Kongo: ras, kön och makt i en finländsk afrikaskildring." *Naistutkimus/Kvinnoforskning*,

test the notion of Nordic exceptionalism: the idea that the Nordic countries have been exceptionally benevolent and innocuous in their relationship with the non-European world. These postcolonial scholarly frameworks have also been applied to the study of Finnish society and history.[40] Most of this scholarship is concentrated on contemporary discourses around multiculturalism and non-Western migrants, but there has also been a growing interest to re-examine Finnish history from postcolonial perspectives.[41]

For the purposes of this study, it is especially important to consider how imperial politics influenced the Finnish nineteenth and early twentieth-century discussions about civilization and developmental differences between nationalities and races. In the nineteenth century, European imperialism became more assertive in acquiring new colonial possessions. Ideas about developmental and civilizational difference became an important ideological device to legitimate these imperial policies: Africans, Arabs, indigenous Siberians and many other non-European peoples were deemed incapable for self-government because of their low level of cultural development or inherent racial inadequacies. While the context of European imperialism was an important context for the popularization of these ideas, they had diverse intellectu-

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Vol. 16, No. 4, 2003, pp. 31–44; Erlend Eidsvik: "Colonial Discourse and Ambivalence: Norwegian Participants on the Colonial Arena in South Africa." In Kristin Loftsdottír & Lars Jensen: *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities.* Ashgate: Farnham 2012, pp. 13–28; Timo Särkkä: "Imperialists without an Empire? Finnish Settlers in Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Rhodesia." *Journal of Migration History.* Vol. 1, No.1, 2016, pp. 75–99.

40 See, for example, Mikko Lehtonen, Olli Löytty & Petri Ruuska: *Suomi toisin sanoen.* Vastapaino: Tampere 2004; Joel Kuortti, Mikko Lehtonen & Olli Löytty (eds.): *Kolonialismin jäljet. Keskustat, periferiat ja Suomi.* Gaudeamus: Helsinki 2007.

41 Anna Rastas: "Reading History Through Finnish Exceptionalism." In Lars Jensen & Kristín Loftsdóttir (eds.): *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities.* Ashgate: Farhnam 2012, pp. 89-103; Maija Urponen: *Ylirajaisia suhteita. Helsingin olympialaiset, Armi Kuusela ja ylirajainen historia*. University of Helsinki: Helsinki 2010.

al origins in, for example, eighteenth-century debates on human classification, evolutionary theories and more universal ideas about the divide between civilization and savagery.[42]

Political, economic and cultural networks created by European colonialism reached also Finland in many ways. Cultural artefacts, such as newspaper reports, maps and literature, that helped normalize European control and a sense of superiority over non-Europeans circulated widely in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Finland. Newspapers that covered colonial wars often depicted the conflicts as struggles between civilization and barbarity, following a well-worn script of European imperialist discourse.[43] The Finnish Missionary Society, which was established in 1859, did missionary work in the German Southwest Africa, and had a major influence on the Finnish image of Africa.[44] Exhibitions of "exotic" cultures, which became popular in turn-of-the-century Finland, also often encouraged Finnish visitors to position themselves on the civilized side of the civilized/barbarian divide that purportedly set apart the global north from the south, and the west from the east.[45] These cultural, political and economic factors encouraged Finns to actively participate in the cross-border cultural process that divided the globe into spheres of civilization and barbarity and made European control over non-European lands seem natural and beneficial.

Yet, civilizational divisions between peoples were drawn also within Finland. Finnish nationalism emerged in the nineteenth century to improve the status of the Finnish-speakers vis-à-vis the Swedish-speaking elite. Some in the elite drew on European racial

42 Bethencourt 2013, pp. 247-251.

43 Olli Löytty & Anna Rastas: "Afrikka Suomesta katsottuna." In Annika Teppo (ed.): *Näkökulmia Saharan eteläpuoliseen Afrikkaan*. Gaudeamus: Helsinki 2011, p. 28

44 Olli Löytty: *Ambomaamme. Suomalaisen lähetyskirjallisuuden me ja muut.* Vastapaino: Tampere 2006, p. 35.

45 Leila Koivunen: *Eksotisoidut esineet ja avautuva maailma: Euroopan ulkopuoliset kulttuurit näytteillä Suomessa 1870–1910-luvuilla.* SHS: Helsinki 2015, p. 241.

and civilizational theories to argue for the inherent superiority of the "Germanic" Swedes over the "Asiatic" Finns.[46] Among Finnish-language nationalists, many of whom were Swedish-speakers themselves, these theories about Finnish inherent inferiority were rejected.[47] The nationalists often conceded the low developmental status of Finnish-speakers, but insisted that Finns could be uplifted through education and enlightenment. Nevertheless, a sense of suspicion and anxiety regarding the developmental possibilities of the Finnish-speaking common people remained a constant feature of the Finnish nationalist discourse. These doubts became even more pronounced in the early twentieth century as working-class Finns embraced socialism to the chagrin of the conservative nationalists.[48]

In their study on political imagination in the early twentieth century Finland, Anttila et al. have noted that discourse on Finnishness was heavily contested during the first years of the centu-

46 Pekka Kalevi Hämäläinen: "Suomenruotsalaisten rotukäsityksiä vallankumouksen ja sisällissodan aikoina." In Aira Kemiläinen (ed.): *Mongoleja vai germaaneja? Rotuteorioiden suomalaiset*. SHS: Helsinki 1985, pp. 409–410; Aira Kemiläinen: *Suomalaiset, outo Pohjolan kansa. Rotuteoriat ja kansallinen identiteetti*. SHS: Helsinki 1993, pp. 168, 170; Juha Siltala: *Valkoisen äidin pojat. Siveellisyys ja sen varjot kansallisessa projektissa.* Otava: Helsinki 1999, pp. 163–167. On Finnish position in European racial theories and Finnish responses to this positioning, see Kemiläinen 1993; Aira Kemiläinen: *Finns in the Shadow of the Aryans: Race Theories and Racism*. Finnish Historical Society: Helsinki 1998; Pekka Isaksson, *Kumma kuvajainen. Rasismi rotututkimuksessa, rotuteorioiden saamelaiset ja suomalainen fyysinen antropologia*. Kustannus Puntsi: [Inari] 2001, pp. 263–272.

47 Vappu Tallgren: "Rotuopeista roduntutkimukseen Suomen älymystön aikakauslehdistössä (Arvi Grotenfeltin, Tor Karstenin ja Kaarlo Hildénin käsityksiä)." In Aira Kemiläinen (ed.): Mongoleja vai germaaneja. Rotuteorioiden suomalaiset. SHS: Helsinki 1985, pp. 391–406; Siltala 1999, p. 167.

48 On Finnish nationalists' conceptions of civilization, see Heikki Kokko: "Sivistyksen surkea tila." In Pertti Haapala, Olli Löytty, Kukku Melkas & Marko Tikka (eds.): *Kansa kaikkivaltias. Suurlakko Suomessa 1905*. Teos: Helsinki 2008, pp. 297–321.

ry.[49] This had much to do with the changed approach of Russia vis-à-vis Finland.[50] From the late 1890s onwards, Finns were at the receiving end of St. Petersburg's efforts to integrate, centralize and standardize the empire. These integrative measures, such as the 1901 conscription law and the 1903 decision to grant dictatorial powers to the Russian General-Governor in Helsinki, were widely interpreted in Finland as a policy of forced Russification, which was in breach of the country's constitution.[51] The turbulent politics of the turn-of-the-century had a profound influence on how Finns thought and talked about nationality. The campaigning against Russian dominance mobilized large sections of the society, from Swedish-speaking liberals to Social Democrats. Different political actors defined the idea of nation differently. Liberals emphasized Finland's constitutional rights, conservative nationalists stressed its ethnic and linguistic unity while the Social Democrats connected the struggle for national autonomy to the betterment of the working people's social position. The democratization of the Finnish political system after 1906 made this competition about the meaning of nationality even more pronounced.

49 Anu-Hanna Anttila, Ralf Kauranen, Olli Löytty, Mikko Pollari, Pekka Rantanen & Petri Ruuska: "Suurlakkoaika ja kansapuheen variaatiot." In Anu-Hanna Anttila, Ralf Kauranen, Olli Löytty, Mikko Pollari, Pekka Rantanen & Petri Ruuska: *Kuriton kansa. Poliittinen mielikuvitus vuoden 1905 suurlakon ajan Suomessa.* Vastapaino: Tampere 2009, pp. 15–19.

50 Andreas Kappeler: *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History.* Pearson Education Limited: Essex 2001, p. 205; Burbank & Cooper 2010, pp. 364–368. As Burbank and Cooper note, these integrative efforts of Russian, Ottoman and other empires should not be too readily cast as forced ethnic or cultural assimilation of minority nationalities. While there certainly were powerful imperial administrators arguing for forced "Russification" or "Turkification," not all arguments for integration relied on visions of ethnic or cultural unity.

51 Osmo Jussila: *Nationalismi ja vallankumous suomalais-venäläisissä suhteissa 1899–1914*. SHS: Helsinki 1979; Antti Kujala: *Venäjän hallitus ja Suomen työväenliike.* SHS: Helsinki 1995. For a contextualization of Russia's policies on Finland in the history of broader imperial practices of integration, see Kappeler 2001, pp. 260–261. On Russia's traditional "pragmatic" approach to intra-imperial differences, see also Burbank & Cooper 2010, pp. 185–199, 271–286.

As Anttila et al. note, there existed many competing visions about Finnishness in the political culture of the early-1900s Finland.[52]

These discussions concerned also Finland's position in the world. During the so-called Russification period many intellectuals made connections between Russia's unjust treatment of Finland and broader imperialist trends in world politics. Russian repression in Finland, and the tsar's high-minded rhetoric of imperial betterment in order to justify this policy, encouraged skepticism towards all imperial missions implemented in the name of civilization. Critics argued that stronger nations everywhere were subjugating the weaker, and then using their powerful position to frame this subjugation as a virtuous act. Rantanen and Ruuska note that Russian oppression encouraged an anti-imperialist sensitivity among many contemporary Finns.[53]

The peak years of Finnish immigration to North America from the 1890s to early 1910s coincided with this turbulent time in Finland's political history. This contested political and cultural field of discourse did not offer any immigrant a ready-made package of cultural beliefs about nationality or race to take with them to America. Ideas about Finnishness and about Finland's position in the world were subject to a heated debate. Moreover, this contested field of discourse on Finnishness was not something that the immigrants abandoned when they boarded the ship to America. As Gualtieri has argued in her study of the early Syrian diaspora in the United States, the idea of homeland should not be conceptualized as a place left behind by the migrants but rather as something that "continued to exist as a living, changing reality in the imagination and everyday lives of individual migrants."[54]

52 Anttila et al. 2009, pp. 15–19.

53 Pekka Rantanen & Petri Ruuska "Alistetun viisaus". In Anu-Hanna Anttila, Ralf Kauranen, Olli Löytty, Mikko Pollari, Pekka Rantanen & Petri Ruuska: *Kuriton kansa. Poliittinen mielikuvitus vuoden 1905 suurlakon ajan Suomessa*. Vastapaino, Tampere 2009, pp. 33–56.

54 Gualtieri 2009, p. 16.

Immigrants and Others: Beyond the Ethnicity Paradigm

While Finnishness was contested and debated in the turn-of-the-century Finland, immigration scholarship often assumes that Finns arrived to America with distinct national identities which they then sought to preserve in their new homeland. Indeed, studies of Finnish-American history have had relatively little to say about Finns' contacts with other national and racial groups. To date, there is no monograph-level study of such contacts or of Finnish perceptions of others. It has long been assumed that Finnish immigrants were uniquely insular and clannish in their relationships with others. Finns have often been thought of as being particularly resistant to out-group connections because of their non-Indo-European language, among other things.[55]

This assumption of Finns' linguistic insularity can be problematized by looking at how the Finnish language of the immigrants changed in North America. When Finnish immigrants settled in the United States, they had to adopt new words in order to describe the alien industrial, political and cultural life they found across the Atlantic. They did so by transforming the tongue-twisting English words they heard into more easily-digestible, Finnicized forms: a mine became a *maini*, a superintendent a *supitentti*, a beer keg a *piirikäki*, and so on. The result was a kind of creole Finnish, or "Finglish." One sphere in which the immigrants' vocabulary expanded strikingly was that of national and racial groups. While contemporary Finland was not as homogeneous as Finnish historiography has traditionally held,[56] the

55 "The immigrant was isolated," Keijo Virtanen, for example, has held. "[H] is or her ability to create new contacts was limited because of language difficulties alone." Keijo Virtanen: "The Return Migration of Finns from North America." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, p. 265.

56 Miika Tervonen: "Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta." In Pirjo Markkola, Hanna Snellman & Ann-Catrin Östman (ed.): *Kotiseutu ja kansakunta. Miten suomalaista historiaa on rakennettu*. SKS: Helsinki 2014, pp. 137–162.

multiethnic industrial society the Finnish immigrants encountered in North America was still a novelty and required linguistic adaptation. Thus, words such as *talimanni* (an Italian), *airis* (an Irishman), *sainamanni* (a Chinaman), *laavis* (a Slav) and *intti* (an Indian) became a part of the immigrant vocabulary—as did epithets like *teiko* (Dago).[57] This conceptual expansion reflected a broader change in the immigrants' social life: encounters with difference had become an everyday affair.

Yet, the assumption of clannishness has remained. This interest in Finns as an isolated group is at least partly due to the significant influence of the so-called ethnicity paradigm in Finnish-American studies. The ethnicity paradigm that became popular in the immigration historiography in the 1960s and 1970s depicted American society as a collection of different ethnic cultures that all had distinct characteristics. The paradigm emerged as a criticism of the more or less assimilationist strain of earlier scholarship that had celebrated the image of America as a melting pot. The new ethnicity paradigm had the virtue of emphasizing immigrants' agency and of exposing the coercive and erasing tendencies that underpinned this celebratory assimilationism.[58] Nathan Glazier and Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously encapsulated the ethos of the new ethnicity paradigm when they stated: "The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen."[59] In

57 Pertti Virtaranta: "Finnish Dialects in America: Some Experiences and Problems." In Michael G. Karni: *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States*. The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, p. 307; Pertti Virtaranta: "Sanalainojen aihepiireistä." In Pertti Virtaranta, Hannele Jönsson-Korhola, Maisa Martin & Maija Kainulainen: *Amerikansuomi*. SKS: Helsinki 1993, p. 81.

58 On the idea of "contributionism" in U.S. immigration discourse, see Robert L. Fleeger: *Ellis Island Nation: Immigration Policy and American Identity in the Twentieth Century*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 2013.

59 Nathan Glazier & Daniel Patrick Moynihan: *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and the Irish of New York City.* The MIT Press: Cambridge 1970, p. 290. Also on "the differentialist turn," see Brubaker 2004, pp.116–118.

his 2014 survey of the field, Auvo Kostiainen noted that Finnish-American historiography had been dominated by the "new ethnicity" paradigm from the 1960s up to the present.[60]

Studies focusing on ethnic maintenance have played an important role in foregrounding immigrant voices, but they have also, paradoxically, achieved their own silencing or distortion of immigrant thoughts and opinions. Kathleen Conzen has observed that the study of ethnic maintenance has sought to "restore agency to the immigrant actor […] but has not always followed that agency into all the varied paths that it could take."[61] One result has been the downplaying of immigrants' connectedness to the different social milieus outside their purported communities. Gerald Ronning, for example, argues that radical Finns "decried the transformation of their children into 'Finn-Yanks,' resisted the adoption of English, […] and generally resisted and criticized Anglo efforts to de-hyphenate them." Finns possessed a radical counter-culture that was "impervious to their critics' barbs."[62] Ronning does not, however, adequately account for those radical Finns, for example, who actively called for Americanization, which entailed the learning of English and the forming of intimate connections with non-Finnish workers in the United States. Indeed, it was the U.S. as a melting pot, rather than preservation, that was the go-to metaphor for most radical Finns discussing Americanization in the early 1900s, as will become evident in this study. Hence, in order to take seriously the question of immigrant agency, we must also account for those ill-fitting voices that are

60 Auvo Kostiainen: "Interest in the History of Finnish Americans." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, p. 18.

61 Kathleen Conzen: "Thomas and Znaniecki and the Historiography of American Immigration." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1996, p. 21.

62 Gerald Ronning: "Jackpine Savages: Discourses of Conquest in the 1916 Mesabi Iron Range Strike." *Labor History*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2003, pp. 378, 380.

not in accord with the identity preservation narrative that was so popular from the 1960s onwards.[63]

To be sure, the Finnish immigrants' position in U.S. ethnoracial hierarchies, or their relationships with other immigrant or racial groups, has never been completely ignored in scholarship. The historiography on the Finnish Americans of the interwar and early postwar era, which was mostly undertaken by immigrants themselves, mainly sought to correct the purportedly incorrect insinuations about the racial status of Finns themselves and emphasize their civic credentials. No serious scholar went to the same lengths as the amateur anthropologist S.C. Olin, whose 1957 tome *Finlandia* tried to "prove" Finnish whiteness by using extensive scientific arguments based on selective readings of European and American physical anthropology. The author also used his own craniological fieldwork that he had carried on a handful of Ohio Finns.[64] Still, many Finnish-American historians shared Olin's willingness to correct the purportedly skewed American representation of their people. In his 1957 history of Minnesota Finns, Hans R. Wasastjerna dismissed the claims of Finns' Asiatic heritage as a "deep-rooted fallacy."[65] Furthermore, in their 1951 history of Wisconsin Finns, John I. Kolehmainen and George W. Hill, drawing on Carleton S. Coon's *The Races of Europe*, decried the "confused" racial theories that associated Finns with Asians.

63 See, for example, Stephen Steinberg: *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America.* Beacon Press: Boston 1989; Russell Kazal: "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History." *The American Historical Review*, Vol 100, No. 2, 1995, pp. 437–471; Rogers Brubaker: *Ethnicity without Groups.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass. 2004; Andreas Wimmer: *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013.

64 S.C. Olin: *Finlandia: The Racial Composition, the Language, and a Brief History of the Finnish People.* Book Concern: Hancock 1957.

65 Hans R. Wasastjerna: *History of the Finns in Minnesota.* Minnesota Finnish-American Historical Society: Duluth 1957, p. 2.

They stated matter-of-factly in the book's preface that "Finns are not related to the Mongols."[66]

From the 1960s, the historians of Finnish Americans became increasingly interested in the oppositional culture of radical Finns and consequently the nativist hostility against Finns was reconsidered. No longer a source of shame in need of correctives, it now became almost a badge of honor. Studies of Finnish-American radicalism that were written in the 1970s and 1980s discussed the racial nativism and anti-radical hostility targeting the Finns in the early 1900s as an attempt by the capitalist society of the U.S. and the pro-business press to repress the immigrants' demands for better wages, safer working conditions and a more dignified existence. Michael Karni, for example, has discussed the nativist rhetoric against the Finns during the 1907 strike on the Mesabi Range,[67] while Peter Kivisto noted the general nativist hostility against Finnish immigrants.[68] What is more, Gerald Ronning has written about the racialized anti-radical rhetoric against Finnish miners before and during the 1916 strike on the Mesabi Range.[69]

66 John I. Kolehmainen & George W. Hill: *Haven in the Woods: The Story of Finns in Wisconsin.* State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Madison 1951, pp. v–vi. See also Armas K.E. Holmio: *Michiganin suomalaisten historia.* Michiganin suomalaisten historia-seura: Hancock 1967, pp. 47–66.

67 Karni 1977, pp. 76–80.

68 Peter Kivisto: *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press: Rutherford 1984, pp. 126–129.

69 Ronning 2003. The 1960s and 1970s New Left provided an important context for these contentions. In his foreword to a 1977 anthology on Finnish-American radicalism, Michael Passi noted that the 1960s generation, like the radicals they studied, felt alienated from "traditional sources of control," had struggled to create a counter-culture and shared "the plunging experience of defeat and despair." Passi notes that the history of Finnish-American radicalism, with its accompanying history of nativist hostility, created a "usable history" for the New Left of the 1960s. See Michael M. Passi: "Introduction: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, p. 21.

Historians have also been interested in the overall image of Finns and Finland in the United States.[70] The most sustained and extensive treatment of the subject is the 2011 article by Peter Kivisto and Johanna Leinonen on the ambiguous position of Finns in the early twentieth-century U.S. discourse on race. These authors also examine Finnish Americans' reactions to racial theories which associated Finns with the Mongol race, as well as the popular Midwestern understanding of the close association between Finns and Native Americans. Finnish-American conservatives, in particular, were highly sensitive to claims of the Asianness of Finns and did their utmost to "prove" Finnish whiteness. In this way, Finnish Americans ended up reproducing the racial discourse on white European superiority.[71] Johanna Leinonen has also examined the tensions between gender, race, nationality and generational groups among twentieth-century Finnish Americans.[72]

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70 Auvo Kostiainen: "The Image of Finnish-Americans in Finland and the United States: A Comparison." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2009, pp. 40–47. See also Pauli Opas: "The Image of Finland and the Finns in the Minds of Americans." *The Michigan Academician*, Vol.3, No. 3, Winter 1971, pp.13–22.

71 Kivisto & Leinonen 2011, pp. 11–33. See also Peter Kivisto & Johanna Leinonen: "Ambiguous Identity: Finnish Americans and the Race Question." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 75–90. Ethnic stereotypes of Finns are also discussed in Mika Rantanen: "Räyhääjä vai raivaaja? Suomalaisten kuva Yhdysvalloissa julkaistuissa pilapiirroksissa 1900-luvun alusta II maailmansotaan." In Sakari Saaritsa & Kirsi Hänninen: *Työväki maahanmuuttajana.* Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura: Jyväskylä 2012, pp. 101–122.

72 Leinonen 2011; Johanna Leinonen: "One Culture, Two Cultures? Families of Finns in the United States in the Twentieth Century." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration*. Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 285–296; Johanna Leinonen: "Who Is a 'Real' Finn? Negotiating Finnish and Finnish-American Identity in Contemporary United States." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 309–316.

There has been little scholarship about the relationship of Finns to other immigrant or racial groups. Most general accounts include some discussion on Finns' relationship to other European immigrant groups.[73] It is sometimes acknowledged that Finns held Southern and Eastern European immigrants, as well as the Irish, in contempt. Yet, the ideological and cultural context of these attitudes is rarely examined beyond the framework of labor competition. Kero acknowledges that every immigrant group had its own "ranking of nationalities," for instance, which determined how interethnic confrontations played out. However, he does not dwell on the origins or context of this cognitive ranking.[74] Some labor historians have noted incidents of anti-Semitism within the Finnish-American labor movement, but have not examined them further.[75]

Finnish attitudes towards groups that they were not in direct competition with in the labor market have received even less attention than their views regarding purportedly competitive European groups. The relationship between Finns and the Ojibwe Indians in the Upper Midwest has been briefly touched upon, and has been deemed to be one in which the former viewed the latter group in a uniquely benevolent manner.[76] This reflects the

73 See, for example, A William Hoglund: *Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880–1920.* The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison 1960, p. 63; Reino Kero: "Irlantilainen siirtolainen amerikansuomalaisten ongelmana". In Melkas, Eevaleena (ed.): *Aavan meren tuolla puolen. Tutkielmia siirtolaishistoriasta.* Department of General History, University of Turku: Turku 1996; Arnold Alanen: "Finns and the Corporate Mining Environment of the Lake Superior Region." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): *Finnish Diaspora II: United States.* Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, pp. 44–45.

74 Kero 1996, pp. 9–10.

75 Auvo Kostiainen: "The Finns and the Crisis Over 'Bolshevization' of the Worker's Party in 1924–25." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila (eds.): The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives. Institute for Migration: Turku 1975, p. 183; Karni 1975, p. 237.

76 Stanley Frank Hunnisett: *From Pohjanmaa to the Shores of Gitchee Gumee: Finns and Indians in the Northern Lake Superior Region.* Unpublished

broader Nordic view that Nordic immigrants enjoyed an exceptionally peaceful and friendly relationship with America's indigenous population.[77] Finnish-American attitudes towards black Americans have been accorded only passing comments by historians. It has often been assumed that Finns largely conformed to broader trends of racism in the United States. When discussing The Knights of Kaleva, a conservative Finnish-American organization, Reino Kero notes that the society's leader was heavily criticized in the late 1920s by his peers for allowing a black woman to join a Seattle chapter of the organization. Kero notes that "It seems that some kind of racial segregation was a part of the Kaleva ideology […] Here, they followed in the footsteps of other white Americans."[78] In his study of Depression-era Finnish-American Communism, David Ahola discusses the animus of Harlem's Finnish Communists towards local black people.[79] These brief discussions of Finnish-American views of black Americans argue that Finns largely conformed to the broader culture of white American racism. Mikko Toivonen's article on the 1920 Duluth lynchings remains the most thorough and nuanced examination of Finnish-American views on black Americans. Toivonen argues that ideological divisions within the Finnish-American community mediated their ideas on black Americans and whiteness. He notes that "[T]he Finnish American community was deeply divided on racial questions."[80]

Finnish-American views on Asian immigrants have received very little attention. Studies on Finns resident in Astoria, Oregon have almost completely ignored the town's substantial Chinese community. Michael Passi does note in passing that Astoria's

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Master's thesis. University of Iowa 1988; Ronning 2003, pp. 379–380.

77 Fur 2004.

78 Reino Kero: *Suomalaisena Pohjois-Amerikassa. Siirtolaiselämää Yhdysvalloissa ja Kanadassa.* Siirtolaisuusinstituutti: Turku 1997, p. 128.

79 Ahola 1980, pp. 204–209.

80 Mikko Toivonen: "Finnish American Press and the Duluth Lynchings of 1920: A Case Study of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1997, p. 189.

Finnish fishermen participated in the exclusion of Chinese from fishing in Columbia River.[81] Peter Kivisto has discussed this issue in more depth.[82]

One reason for the lack of studies on Finnish-American views on racial minorities is undoubtedly the rural bias in much of the scholarship. As Matti Kaups observed in 1981, there is "an utter void" in studies of urban Finns who made up a significant section of the immigrant population.[83] Over three decades later the situation is much the same. Urban Finns have received limited attention in some articles and monographs,[84] but extensive studies on Finnish immigrants in metropolises and smaller cities are still few and far between. Those studies that have examined urban Finns also usually comment on the relationship between Finns and racial minorities in cities like New York and Detroit. Anja Olin-Fahle notes in her study of the Finnish community in Brooklyn that Finns viewed the Puerto Ricans who moved into their neighborhood as delinquents and organized opposition to this perceived threat. Yet, she presents this defense of racial segregation as righteous protection of ethnic identity against assimilation.[85] Esko Tommola's study of New York Finns largely

81 Michael Passi: "Fishermen on Strike: Finnish Workers and Community Power in Astoria, Oregon 1880-1900." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives.* Institute of Migration: Turku 1975, p. 96; See also Kivisto 1984, p. 90.

82 Kivisto 1984, p. 88–92.

83 Matti Kaups: "Finns in Urban America: A View from Duluth." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): Finnish Diaspora II: United States. The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, p. 64.

84 See, for example, Tommola 1988; Keijo Virtanen: "Urban American and the Finnish Communities of Detroit and Chicago." In Eero Kuparinen (ed.): *Pitkät jäljet. Historioita kahdelta mantereelta. Professori Reino Kerolle hänen täyttäessään 60 vuotta 2.3.1999.* Turun yliopiston historian laitos julkaisuja 49. University of Turku: Turku 1999, pp. 386–401; Alanen 2014.

85 Anja Hellikki Olin-Fahle: *Finnhill: Persistence of Ethnicity in Urban America.* New York University: New York 1983. See also Anja H. Olin-Fahle: "Persistence of Finnishness in Urban America: An Anthropological Inquiry." In Michael G. Karni, Olavi Koivukangas, Edward W. Laine (eds): *Finns*

reproduces this framework. He notes that Finnish New Yorkers in Harlem and Brooklyn viewed their black and Puerto Rican neighbors with disdain and had little contact with them. He explains their move away from these neighborhoods by referring to the "encroachment" of non-white communities into these areas.[86] Michael Loukinen's study of Detroit Finns notes that rising crime enhanced their "racial hatred" and encouraged them to leave the city in the postwar period, but does not discuss the issue further.[87] Thus, the few studies of Finns in urban America have not critically engaged with the question of race. Finnish attitudes towards issues such as restrictive covenants, redlining, or other segregationist policies, for example, remain unexamined.

The scholarship on the Finnish-American labor movement has not discussed Finnish radicals' views of other national and racial groups.[88] It is more common to contend that radicals sim-

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in North America: Proceedings of Finn Forum III, 5-8 September 1984, Turku, Finland. Institute of Migration: Turku, pp. 120–131.

86 Esko Tommola: *Uuden maan rakentajat. New Yorkin suomalaisten tarina.* Otava: Helsinki 1989, pp. 119, 199, 250.

87 Michael M. Loukinen: "Second Generation Finnish-American Migration from Northwoods to Detroit, 1920-1950." In Michael G. Karni: *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States.* The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, p. 123.

88 The first histories of the Finnish-American labor movement were written by Frans J. Syrjälä and Elis Sulkanen, both veterans of the movement. See F.J. Syrjälä: *Historia-aiheita Ameriikan suomalaisesta työväenliikkeestä*. Suomal. Sosial. Kust. Yhtiö: Fitchburg [1925]; Elis Sulkanen: *Amerikan suomalaisen työväenliikkeen historia*. Amerikan suomalainen kansanvallan liitto & Raivaaja Publishing Company: [Fitchburg] 1951; The scholarship on Finnish-American radicalism bourgeoned in the 1970s, and has again in recent years attracted increasing scholarly attention. See Michael Karni: *Yhteishyvä, or For the Common Good: Finnish Radicalism in the Western Great Lakes Region, 1900–1940*. University of Minneso-ta: Minneapolis 1975; Douglas Ollila, Jr.: "The Emergence of Radical Industrial Unionism in the Finnish Socialist Movement." In Vilho Niitemaa (ed.): *Publications of the Institute of General History University of Turku Finland*, Nr. 7. Vammalan Kirjapaino Oy: Vammala 1975, pp. 25–54; *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America*. Tyomies Society: Superior, Wis. 1977; Carl Ross: *The Finn Factor in American*

ply dismissed these questions in favor of internationalist class politics. This has led some scholars of the Finnish-American labor movement to treat racism as a foreign ideological influence on socialist ideology. In his study on Finnish radicals in Michigan, Gary Kaunonen, for example, notes a racist caricature of a black man, published in a Finnish-American socialist humor magazine in 1909. He notes that the cartoon revealed the possible shallowness of the Finnish radicals' proletarian internationalism: "Underneath all the [Finnish socialists'] early rhetoric about working-class solidarity, there was perhaps a latent and episodic racism regarding African Americans."[89] This formulation misses, however, the possibility that socialist ideology, or certain forms of socialist ideology, could have easily coexisted with denigrating imagery of Africans and other peoples who were deemed less advanced than Europeans.

The notion that socialism was incompatible with nationalism and racism ignores the lively debates on the so-called nationality question within the international socialist movement from Marx onwards.[90] In the United States, socialists had heated dis-

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Labor, Culture, and Society. Parta Printers, Inc.: New York Mills, Minn. 1977; Auvo Kostiainen: *The Forging of Finnish-American Communism, 1917–1924: A Study in Ethnic Radicalism*. Migration Institute: Turku 1978; Albert Joseph Gedicks, Jr.: *Working Class Radicalism among Finnish Immigrants in Minnesota and Michigan Mining Communities*. University Microfilms International: Ann Arbor, Mich. 1979; Peter Kivisto: *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press: Rutherford 1984; Varpu Best-Lindstrom: *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada*. Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1988; Kaunonen 2010; Beaulieu et. Al. 2011; Mikko Pollari: "Teosofia ja 1900-luvun alun suomalaisen ja amerikansuomalaisen työväenliikkeen transatlanttiset yhteydet." In Sakari Saaritsa & Kirsi Hänninen (eds.): Työväki *maahanmuuttajina*. Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura: Jyväskylä 2012, pp. 46–69.

89 Kaunonen 2010, p. 86.

90 Walker Connor: *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 1984; Francine Hirsch: *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2005. On the nationality question in early twentieth-century Finnish socialism, see, for example, Antti Ku-

cussions on issues, such as Asian immigration and the position of black workers within the American working class.[91] Nationality and race were far from marginal issues for early twentieth-century socialists and communists. The Finnish labor movement in the United States was constantly influenced by the cross-border movement of people, publications and ideas across the Atlantic. Hence, the Finnish socialists' thinking on these questions was not only profoundly shaped by American debates, but also by discussions in Finland and Russia.[92]

In recent years, scholarship on Nordic immigrants' relationship with other peoples, and their position in American ethnoracial rankings, has bourgeoned in recent years. Historians have studied Nordic immigrants' relationships to other immigrant groups,[93] as well as to America's indigenous populations,[94] the

jala: *Vallankumous ja kansallinen itsemääräämisoikeus: Venäjän sosialistiset puolueet ja suomalainen radikalismi vuosisadan alussa*. SHS: Jyväskylä 1989; Jouko Heikkilä: *Kansallista luokkapolitiikkaa. Sosialidemokraatit ja Suomen autonomian puolustus 1905–1917*. SHS: Helsinki 1993.

91 See, for example, Foner 1977. Foner notes (p. xiii) that "few issues were more widely discussed in the [Socialist] party press than the Negro question."

92 On the transnationalism of the early twentieth-century Finnish and Finnish-American labor movement, see Ralf Kauranen & Mikko Pollari: "Transnational Socialist Imagination: The Connections between Finnish Socialists in the USA and Finland at the Turn of the 20th Century". In *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States*. Michel S. Beaulieu, Ronald N. Harpelle & Jaimi Penney (Eds.). Institute of Migration: Turku 2011, 26–49.

93 Philip J. Anderson & Dag Blanck (ed.): *Norwegians and Swedes in the United States: Friends and Neighbors.* Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2012.

94 Karen Hansen: *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and the Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930.* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2013; Gunlög Fur: "Romantic Relations: Swedish Attitudes towards Indians during the Twentieth Century." *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly.* Vol. 55, No. 3, 2004, pp. 145–164; Gunlög Fur: "Indians and Immigrants—Entangled Histories." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2014, pp. 55–76.

immigrants' transnational connectedness[95] and their position in U.S. racial hierarchies.[96] These approaches have also been evident in Finnish-American studies.[97] This study builds on this recent scholarship on immigrant connectedness and challenges the well-worn notion that Finns were a particularly clannish and parochial immigrant group.[98] The study will illustrate that their political

95 Beaulieu, Michael S., Harpelle, Ronald N. & Penney, Jaimi (Eds.): *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States*. Institute of Migration: Turku 2011; Daron W. Olson: *Vikings Across the Atlantic: Emigration and the Building of a Greater Norway, 1860–1945*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 2013; Peter Kivisto: "The Transnational Practices of Finnish Immigrants." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration*. Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 297–308; Adam Hjorthén: *Border-Crossing Commemorations: Entangled Histories of Swedish Settling in America*. Stockholm University: Stockholm 2015.

96 Peter Kivisto: "When Did America's Finns Become White?" In Jarmo Lainio, Annaliina Gynne & Raija Kangassalo (eds.): *Transborder Contacts and the Maintenance of Finnishness in the Diaspora: An Interdisciplinary Conference in Finnish, Finnish-North American and Sweden Finnish Studies: Mälardalen University, Campus Eskilstuna, June 17-20, 2007*. Centre for Finnish Studies: 2009, pp. 25–42; Peter Kivisto & Johanna Leinonen: "Representing Race: Ongoing Uncertainties about Finnish-American Racial Identity." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Fall 2011, pp. 11–33; Johanna Leinonen: "'A Yankee Boy Promised Me Everything Except the Moon': Changing Marriage Patterns of Finnish Migrants in the U.S. in the Twentieth Century." In Elli Heikkilä & Saara Koikkalainen (eds.): *Finns Abroad: New Forms of Mobility and Migration*. Institute of Migration: Turku, pp. 82–102; Dag Blanck: "'A Mixture of People with Different Roots.' Swedish Immigrants in the American Ethno-Racial Hierarchies." *Journal of American Ethnic History,* Vol. 33, No. 3, 2014, pp. 37–54; Jørn Brøndal: "'The Fairest among the So-Called White Races': Portrayals of Scandinavian Americans in the Filiopietistic and Nativist Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2014, pp. 5–36.

97 See, for example, Leinonen 2011; Kivisto & Leinonen 2011; Kaunonen 2011.

98 There have of course been exceptions. Matti Kaups insisted already in the 1980s that the narrative on Finnish clannishness was misguided. See Matti E. Kaups: "The Finns in the Copper and Iron Ore Mines of the Western Great Lakes Region, 1864-1905: Some Preliminary Observa-

concerns and activities went well beyond their ethnic community and that their thinking drew on varied intellectual influences.

Material, Methods and Concepts

Material

The main source materials of this thesis are Finnish-language immigrant newspapers published in the United States in the early twentieth century. Some three hundred Finnish newspaper titles were published in the United States between the 1870s and the late twentieth century. Most of these were very short-lived, had limited circulation and have not survived in their entirety, if at all. Almost a fourth of the newspapers were affiliated with or were sympathetic to the labor movement.[99] The first major Finnish-language socialist newspaper in the United States was entitled *Amerikan Suomalainen Työmies* ("America's Finnish Working Man") established in 1903 in Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1904, the newspaper shortened its name to *Työmies* ("The Working Man") and relocated to Hancock, Michigan. It served the Midwestern Finnish socialist (and later communist) constituency throughout the twentieth century (it was folded in 1998). On the East Coast, socialist Finns read *Raivaaja* ("The Pioneer"), based in Fitchburg,

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tions." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives*. Institute of Migration: Turku 1975, p. 89. More recently, the labor historian Gary Kaunonen has contested the narrative on clannishness. See Gary Kaunonen (2011): "Forging a Unique Solidarity: Finnish Immigrant Socialists and the Early 20th Century Socialist Party of America." In Michael S. Beaulieu, Ronald N. Harpelle, & Jaimi Penney (eds.): *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States*. Institute of Migration: Turku 2011, pp. 84–85.

99 Auvo Kostiainen: "The Growth and Decline of the Labour Press in North America." In Michael G. Karni, Olavi Koivukangas & Edward W. Laine (eds.): *Finns in North America: Proceedings of Finn Forum III, 5-8 September 1984, Turku, Finland.* Institute of Migration: Turku 1988, p. 260.

Massachusetts, and on the West Coast they read *Toveri* ("The Comrade"), which was published in Astoria, Oregon. Ideological strife within the Finnish-American labor movement spawned two newspapers that gained a large circulation in their own right. *Industrialisti* emerged when radical socialists split from the Finnish Socialist Federation in 1914. The paper soon affiliated with the IWW. In 1921, as socialists retained control of the *Raivaaja* during the socialist-communist split, east-coast communists established *Eteenpäin* ("Forward") in order to serve their base in Massachusetts, New York, and the eastern seaboard in general. In 1911, the Finnish Socialist Federation established a women's newspaper *Toveritar* ("The Woman Comrade"). These were the newspapers with the widest circulation among Finnish immigrant radicals (for more information about the newspapers, see Appendix 1).[100]

Five of the six newspapers were dailies for most of their existence; only the women's paper *Toveritar* (later *Työläisnainen* and *Naisten Viiri*) was a weekly. It has thus been impossible to examine in detail every issue of every newspaper for the duration of the whole period under study. Instead, in every chapter I examine shorter periods in more depth, while covering the rest in a more cursory fashion. While certain details get lost because of this approach, it still allows for covering a longer period of time and the examination of broader trends in the development of the Left's racial thinking.

Finnish-American leftist magazines and journals (*Säkeniä*, *Viesti*, *Lapatossu*, and *Punikki*) represent another press source used in this study. I also use individual articles from non-socialist Finnish-American newspapers (e.g. *Amerikan Kaiku*, *New Yorkin Uutiset* and *Päivälehti*), U.S. mainstream and socialist newspapers (*The New York Times*, *Duluth News-Tribune*, *Chicago Dai-*

100 On the Finnish-American labor press, see Kostiainen 1988; Paul George Hummasti: "'The Workingman's Daily Bread': Finnish-American Working Class Newspapers, 1900–1921." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Press: Superior 1977, pp. 167–194.

ly Socialist and *Daily Worker*), and Finnish mainstream and socialist newspapers (e.g. *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Työmies* and *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*). I also use books, calendars, and pamphlets published by Finnish-American socialist publishing houses, the publications of U.S. socialists and communists (such as socialist party convention proceedings and communist party material on the so-called Negro question), as well as memoirs written by radicals. Furthermore, I utilize two oral history collections in order to complement my analysis. The first is a set of interviews of Minnesota's Finnish immigrants, which were collected by Works Progress Administration (WPA) researchers between 1938 and 1939. Among the Minnesota WPA's interviewees were some 150 Finnish migrants.[101] The second oral history source used in the present study is the Oral History of the American Left Collection. This collection includes interviews with eleven Finnish-American leftists, which were conducted by the historian Paul Buhle in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[102]

Methods

Scholars of immigration history have long acknowledged the importance of the immigrant press when researching the worldviews of European and Asian immigrants in the United States. Already in 1922, Robert Park noted the significance of newspapers in immigrant assimilation. By reading news of U.S. politics, society and culture, immigrants became familiar with their new country.[103] As scholars later became interested in the ethnic mi-

101 Auvo Kostiainen: "Amerikansuomalaisen kuva. Työttömyystyönä tallennettua Minnesotan suomalaisten historiaa." In Pentti Virrankoski, Matti Lauerma, Kalervo Hovi & Keijo Virtanen (eds.): *Turun Historiallinen Arisko 31*. Vammalan Kirjapaino: Vammala 1975, pp. 414–431.

102 I also use an individual interview of a co-operative activist from Georgia from Kalervo Mustonen's Oral History Collection at the Institute of Migration, Turku.

103 Robert Park: *Immigrant Press and Its Control.* Harper and Brothers Publisher: New York 1922.

lieus of the immigrants, the newspapers were again an important source material. Robert Harney has noted that the immigrant press is the "best primary source for an understanding of the world of non-English-speaking groups in the United States, their expectations and concerns, their backgrounds and evolution as individual communities."[104]

Yet, the immigrant press should not be viewed only as a window to the particular worldviews of the communities that these papers served. Rather, they can be searched for evidence about how the writers and readers of these papers engaged with the world outside their purported communities. This engagement went beyond the borders of the United States. Scholars who have studied the transnational circulation of newspapers have noted the potential of "a shared body of news" to create transnational intellectual communities.[105] Scholars of Finnish-American history have long noted how Finnish immigrant newspapers operated in a transatlantic space, maintaining contacts between North America and Europe.[106] Indeed, even a cursory glance at Finnish-American radical newspapers will illustrate how they sought to transcend the parochial: they featured news and letters from different parts of North America, Finland and Russia; updated readers about events in far-away places like India, Japan, Persia and South Africa; and published translated writing from theoreti-

104 Quoted in Vellon 2017, p. 9. See also Matthew Lindaman: "Heimat in the Heartland: The Significance of an Ethnic Newspaper." *Journal of American Ethnic History.* Vol. 23, No. 3, 2004, pp. 78–98.

105 Tony Ballantyne: *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire.* Palgrave: Houndmills 2002, p. 12.

106 Auvo Kostiainen: "The Tragic Crisis: Finnish-American Workers and the Civil War in Finland." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior: 1977, pp. 217–235; Peter Kivisto: "Finnish Americans and the Homeland, 1918–1958." *Journal of American Ethnic Studies.* Vol. 7, No. 1, 1987, pp. 9–28; Peter Kivisto: "The Transnational Practices of Finnish Immigrants." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Integration and Dissent.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 297–308.

cians, politicians, journalists, labor organizers and other authorities from different national backgrounds.

Indeed, I will examine the immigrant press as an active forum of debate and intellectual interaction, not as a window on a closed system of thought. The word *thinking* in the title of this dissertation is to describe an active process; ideas about race, nationality and other forms of difference never coalesced to form a coherent and consistent body of immigrant thought. To examine this processual thinking, I will search the newspapers for evidence of different kinds of intellectual *interactions*. Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann has noted that immigrant newspapers served the function of a "public sphere" as they provided ample space for the interaction between readers and editors. Readers could participate in content production by writing letters and serving as correspondents. Thus, the readers were not passive recipients of editors' opinions and beliefs, but active participants in the production of the newspapers.[107] Like Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, I examine the newspapers as an interactive space. Yet, I argue that newspapers were also forums for interactions that went beyond the immigrant community. I am interested, for example, in what kinds of news items Finnish newspapers translated from American and international newspapers; to which intellectual sources the writers drew on when arguing about issues such as race; what kinds of non-Finnish writers the newspapers publish; and to what kinds of contacts with non-Finnish people do the writers refer in their writing.

Another way in which I will use the material to examine the processual character of racial thinking is to connect abstract ideas about race and nationality to specific events in their historical contexts. In every chapter, I will examine specific events—for example, the 1907 and 1916 strikes on the Mesabi Range, the Duluth lynchings of 1920, the August Jokinen case in Harlem in 1931 – to examine how specific contexts shaped abstract ideas

107 Anna D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann: "'Everybody Writes': Readers and Editors and Their Interactions in the Polish-Language Press, 1922–1969." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Fall 2013, pp. 36–37.

about, for example, racial equality or developmental differences between nationalities.

There are some methodological problems inherent in studying broader modes of thinking through a selection of published texts. As Steve Hochstadt notes, study of history through texts can be "a form of elitism," where the historian foregrounds the experiences of people able to produce texts over those less literate or less able to have their views printed in newspapers or other printed sources. Hochstadt points out that "Textual analysis restricts potential subjects to the creators of texts, a tiny and highly selective minority of people in the past."[108] In the study of ideas like race or nation, focus on producers of text presents specific problems. Since texts on race and nation are often produced by people with a special interest in these phenomena, the projection of these printed ideas as reflections of broader patterns of thought easily inflates the importance of racial or national thinking. Our view of the social reality becomes "overethnicized."[109]

To correct for this possible bias, I remain sensitive to "rank and file" constructions of race which may have differed from those constructions maintained by party representatives or journalists.[110] The immigrant press of the early twentieth century was a multivocal space, where readers of the papers actively engaged with the editors by writing letters and serving as local correspondents.[111] Every issue of the newspapers included local news about get-togethers, meetings and other social events that were written by a local correspondent. As Hummasti has noted, these texts only very rarely engaged in any extended ideological or political dis-

108 Steve Hochstadt: *Mobility and Modernity: Migration in Germany, 1820–1989*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor 1999, p. 4. On "elite bias" in studies of ethnicity, see also Brubaker 2004, pp. 86–87.

109 Brubaker 2004, p. 12.

110 On the importance of studying "'rank-and-file' construction of racial, ethnic and national 'realities,'" see Brubaker 2004, p. 86. See also Hobsbawm 1992, pp. 10–11; Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, & Liana Grancea: *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton University Press: Princeton 2006. pp. 13–14, 167–172.

111 Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2013.

cussion.[112] This lack of engagement is in itself an important piece of data since it corrects for our often over-politicized view of radical immigrants.[113] When these correspondents' articles comment on issues like race or interethnic interaction, they give important information about how the ideologies of the newspaper or organization were received at the rank-and-file level. Moreover, I will complement my reading of newspaper articles with other kinds of sources (namely, oral history material and memoirs), which can correct for the bias that might ensue from overt reliance on printed newspaper texts.

Another methodological problem that needs addressing is "groupism," or the "tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis."[114] Since my research focuses on a single putative ethnic group (or a group within a group), it is vulnerable to this kind of methodological groupism. A narrowed focus on a single ethnicity can easily lead to distortions that Emirbayer and Desmond have identified: the study may build into a neat story of a semiautonomous case that exists in isolation from other groups and societal networks.[115] I have corrected for this possible bias by including non-Finnish sources to my material. While I do not use them as extensively as I use Finnish-language sources, I will also examine the English-language leftist press, U.S. mainstream newspapers, Socialist and Communist Party documents and memoirs by non-Finnish leftist activists.

112 Hummasti 1977.

113 On the over-politicized image of Finnish-American radicals, see Peter V. Krats: "Limited Loyalties: The Sudbury, Canada Finns and Their Institutions, 1887-1935." In Michael G. Karni, Olavi Koivukangas & Edward W. Laine (eds.): *Finns in North America: Proceedings of Finn Forum III 5-8 September 1984, Turku, Finland.* Migration Studies C 9. Institute of Migration: Turku, Finland 1988, pp. 188, 196–198; Hummasti 1981, pp. 188–189.

114 Brubaker 2004, p. 8.

115 Emirbayer & Desmond 2015, p. 42.

Any student of race needs to carefully explain how she uses this contentious term. This study is premised on the well-established notion that race is a product of history, not of nature. We know from decades of scientific research on human evolution and genetics that the humankind cannot be divided into racial types.[116] Consequently, sociological and historical study of race has in recent decades undergone a paradigm shift from objectivist to subjectivist understandings. Whereas objectivism treated races as actually existing entities in the world, subjectivism does not view race as an ontological reality. In subjectivist understanding, race does not have a pre- or extra-social existence but is constituted by people's beliefs and classification practices. Race and ethnicity are not viewed as "*things in the world*" but as "*perspectives on and constructions of the world*."[117]

While this idea of race as a subjective perspective on the world has been widely accepted in scholarship, there is still wide disagreement about how race should be studied. Especially in the United States, many scholars have insisted that race should be held apart from other kinds of ethnic thought. "Ethnicity," it is often noted, should be seen as a mostly voluntary and rather malleable

116 This is not a particularly novel scientific breakthrough. The notion that race is a superfluous concept in human biology was implicit already in Darwin's theory of evolution, although these implications of Darwinism were not readily apparent for all of his contemporary and later adherents. Discoveries in human genetics and inheritance in the 1920s and 1930s further discredited the belief in permanent racial types in humans. See Michael Banton: *What We Now Know about Race and Ethnicity.* Berghahn: New York 2015, 15–18. On the antiracist implications of Darwinism, see also Adrian Desmond & James Moore: *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston 2009. On the scientific discrediting of race in the interwar era, see Elazar Barkan: *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1993.

117 Rogers Brubaker: *Grounds for Difference.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge 2015, p. 48. Italics in the original.

category that is based on cultural ancestry and does not map onto strict societal hierarchies. It is usually associated with intra-white divisions within U.S. society. "Race," on the other hand, is often seen as a mostly involuntary and rigid category that is based on purported biological, especially phenotypical, difference and that ranks people into societally significant hierarchies. It is usually used to describe the hierarchical divisions between America's population of European, African and Asian descendants, and its emergence is connected with the colonial expansion of European powers from the fifteenth century.[118]

This neat division between ethnicity and race, however, has recently faced increasing criticism. As scholars of comparative ethnic studies have noted, the conceptual division between race and ethnicity has a tendency to simplify patterns of ethnoracial thought.[119] Mara Loveman, for example, has noted that the separation of biological and hereditary "race" from cultural and voluntary "ethnicity" does not hold up to "the variety of ways that human beings think, write and talk about the diversity of other human beings. In practice, notions of biological and cultural difference are often inextricably intertwined."[120] Indeed, distinction between race and ethnicity hides the commonalities between the two concepts. As Jonathon Glassman has noted, both concepts share the assumption that humanity consists of internally homogeneous "authentic cultural wholes," and they both imagine the

118 For a recent review of relevant scholarship on the race/ethnicity divide and for a subtle case for the analytical separation of race from ethnicity, see Mustafa Emirbayer & Matthew Desmond: *The Racial Order.* The University of Chicago Press: Chicago 2015, pp. 55–64.

119 Loïc Wacquant: "For an Analytic of Racial Domination." *Political Power and Social Theory.* Vol. 11, No. 1997, pp. 221–234; Mara Loveman: "Is 'Race' Essential?" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 64, No. 6, 1999, pp. 891–899; Rogers Brubaker: "Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism." *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 21–42 Andreas Wimmer: "Race-Centrism: A Critique and a Research Agenda", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 13, October 2015, pp. 2187–2188.

120 Mara Loveman: National Colors: Racial Classification and the State in Latin America. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2014, p. 38.

homogeneity of these cultural wholes through the idea consanguinity. This imagery assumes that the peoples associated with distinct cultures are linked by common blood ties. Thus, languages of race and ethnicity (and nationality) can be viewed as varieties of a "common discourse on difference that categorizes humanity via metaphors of descent." The differences between them are ones of degree, not of kind.[121]

Moreover, the elevation of race to the status of an analytical concept presents particular problems for analysis that seeks to account for historical change. As many sociologists drawing on Bourdieu have noted, the treatment of race (or ethnicity or nationality) as an analytical concept tends to reify racial difference and blurs the important analytical distinction between categories and groups. It encourages us to take the existence of racialized social groups as a given and to ignore the contested classification processes that have created racial boundaries.[122] In historical analysis, these problems become particularly pronounced. As Frederick Cooper has noted, historical analysis that takes the now-extant social categories as its analytical starting points risks "doing history backwards." Searching for the genealogies of present-day social constructions in the past becomes easily an anachronistic exercise, where the researcher attributes to her research subjects ideas and motivations that could not have been available to them at their time. This kind of backwards-gaze also loses sight of those social categories that were important at their own time, but may have since lost their relevance.[123]

Indeed, the U.S. historians of ethnicity, race and immigration have increasingly noted the difficulties inherent in maintaining

121 Glassman 2011, pp. 10–12.

122 Loveman 1999, 2014, p. 32; Wacquant 1997. The notion that ethnicity and race are poor categories for rigorous sociological explanation is not particularly novel. In his discussion of ethnicity and race, Max Weber noted that "the collective term 'ethnic'" was "unsuitable for a really rigorous analysis." See Max Weber: Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology. Volume 1. University of California Press: Berkeley 1978, p. 395.

123 Frederick Cooper: *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History.* University of California Press: Berkeley 2005, pp. 18–19.

a clear distinction between race and ethnicity. David Roediger has recently noted how the cross-pollination between studies of ethnicity and race – set in motion in no small part by interest in European immigrants' whiteness in the 1990s – has resulted in a "racial turn" in ethnic history.[124] Early twentieth-century immigrants to America did not subscribe to a clear-cut separation between "biological" race and "cultural" ethnicity. In the early-1900s American parlance, immigrant groups were referred to as races. Thus, the projection of the analytic division between race and ethnicity to explain early twentieth-century thinking on human variance in the United States would simplify and distort the contemporary patterns of thought.[125] It would also imply that the modern division between race and ethnicity is somehow a more authentic reflection of the "reality" of human variance than early twentieth-century thinking on difference and ancestry.[126]

This study follows those Weberian sociologists of ethnicity who have argued for an encompassing definition of ethnicity/race and have maintained that ethnicity, race and nationality are all subtypes of a common social phenomenon.[127] Thus, instead of insisting on a clear analytical distinction between race, ethnicity and nationality, this study treats these concepts as categories of practice. These are "categories of everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors, as distinguished from the experience-distant categories used by social analysts."[128] I use terms such as *human variance* or *human difference* in order to describe humankind's phenotypical, somatic, habitual and linguistic variance in the abstract.[129] I also sometimes use the term

124 David Roediger: "The Racial Turn in Ethnic History." *Journal of American Ethnic History.* Vol. 36, No. 2, 2017, pp. 54–61.

125 Peter Kivisto: "The View from America: Comments on Banton." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 3, 2003, pp. 532–533.

126 Jacobson 1998, pp. 6–7.

127 Kivisto 2003; Brubaker 2004; 2009; Wimmer 2013; Loveman 2014.

128 Brubaker & Cooper 2000, p. 4.

129 Sadiah Qureshi: *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain.* The University of Chicago Press: Chicago

ethnoracial as a means of denoting the generic divisions between peoples that are seen to naturally belong together because of some hereditary or ancestral trait.[130] I try to maintain a distance between these actors' categories and the concepts that I use in order to make broader arguments about the thinking and actions of Finnish leftists. In other words, I avoid explaining race with race or its derivatives, such as racism.[131]

Moreover, instead of using the analytical concept of race to explain racial thinking, I will employ concepts that direct focus to *processes* of boundary-making and classification. Focus on cognitive practices (identification, classification, categorization) avoids the assumption that *ideas* about racial groupness necessarily produce the social reality of racial groupness that they assume and describe. As Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper explain, processual terms like categorization and identification do not "presuppose that […] identifying (even by powerful agents, such as the state) will necessary result in the internal sameness, the distinctiveness, the bounded groupness that political entrepreneurs may seek to achieve."[132] Focusing on identification and categorization as open-ended practices invites us to pose important ques-

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2011, pp. 10–11.

130 Loveman 2014, pp. 37–39; Rogers Brubaker: *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2016, pp. xiii. The term "ethno-racial" is also used in Blanck 2014.

131 On the difference between categories of analysis and categories of practice, see Rogers Brubaker & Frederick Cooper: "Beyond 'Identity.'" *Theory &* Society, Vol 29, No. 1, 2000, pp. 4–6. In maintaining the distance between practical and analytical categories, I mostly refrain from using scare quotes around terms, such as race or whiteness, for aesthetic and consistency reasons. Not only do the repeated quotation marks or inverted commas make for a tedious reading experience, but they also set some social constructions apart from others in an inconsistent way. If race is restricted within quotation marks, why not other social constructions, like nationality, gender and religion? I hope to convey the constructedness of all these categories by utilizing other means than punctuation. For a case against scare quotes in studies of race, see, for example, Jacobson 1998, pp. ix–x.

132 Brubaker & Coope 2000, p. 14.

tions about the extent to which dominant discourses or modes of thinking structure the self-understandings of the actors under study.

Research Questions and Structure

The overarching question that this study examines is how Finnish radicals described and explained human variance in the United States and in the world at large. This broader question can be broken down into three main research questions. First, I examine how the Finnish radicals identified themselves and others. I am interested in how they viewed and positioned themselves vis-à-vis other racial and national groups, and how they described and explained the difference of other putative races and nationalities. I also discuss *why* certain kinds of descriptions and explanations were used. Second, I am interested in how they understood the nature and significance of racial and national difference. Finally, I will also examine the temporal changes in these understandings. How and why did Finnish radicals' discourse on racial and national difference change during the period of my study?

I will study these questions against the backdrop of two assumptions that have guided previous scholars of Finnish-American history and immigration history more generally. First is the assumption about racial adaptation or racial Americanization. This assumption maintains that Finnish immigrants did not view themselves in terms of race before their arrival to the United States, but that they learned to think racially only in America. While race has not been studied much in the Finnish-American historiography, some scholars have referred to this assumption. Kero's contention about the motivations of Finnish-American conservatives who excluded a black woman from their organization is an example of this assumption. Kero maintains that the Finnish conservatives "followed in the footsteps of other white

Americans."[133] The idea of race as part of Americanization was also prominent in early scholarship on European immigrants and whiteness.[134] The more recent studies in the genre have qualified this assumption by noting immigrants' pre-migration ideas on race and transnational connections.[135]

The other assumption about immigrants and race has been more prevalent in studies of immigration and ethnic history. This assumes that ethnic hostilities to out-groups were something that immigrants brought with them from Europe or that they were something that were the result of groups' inner dynamics. Again, since the issue of race has been only little examined in Finnish-American studies, there are few explicit articulations of this assumption. One example is Anja Olin-Fahle's contention that Finnish anti-Puerto Rican attitudes reflect a continuing persistance of ethnic identity.[136] This assumption about racial hatred as a result of ethnic insularity (or solidarity) has been expressed also in studies of the American Left's racial politics. For example, Mark Salomon explains the prevalence of white chauvinism among communist "ethnics" in the following way: "Although avowing Marxist internationalism, these groups often turned inward, using the protective barriers of language and ethnic affinity against the pressures of an unfamiliar and often hostile external environment."[137]

My study challenges these two narratives by positing that immigrant racial thinking was a product of both American and Finnish influences. Moreover, it was also a much more complicated matter. The engagement of immigrants with their surroundings has traditionally been imagined through the idea of assim-

133 Reino Kero: *Suomalaisena Pohjois-Amerikassa. Siirtolaiselämää Yhdysvalloissa ja Kanadassa*. Siirtolaisuusinstituutti: Turku 1997, p. 128.

134 See, for example, Ignatiev 1995; Brodkin 1998.

135 Roediger 2005, p. 110; Guglielmo 2004, p. 21-23; Gualtieri 2009; Zecker 2013, pp. 50-67; Vellon 2017.

136 Olin-Fahle 1983; 1988.

137 Solomon 1998, pp. 137–138. See also, for example, Ahola 1980, pp. 204–209.

ilation: that immigrant communities struggled to find balance between the competing tendencies of societal assimilation and ethnic preservation. However, recent scholarship on transnationalism has contested this reading by pointing to much more varied and multifaceted interaction processes between immigrants and their surroundings. European immigrants maintained connections to their homelands even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; as many historians of immigration have noted, cross-border connectedness is not a novel phenomenon.[138] Moreover, transnational connections do not necessarily imply connections between co-nationals. Religious, academic, merchant and many other communities have developed ties throughout history between, not only within, ethnic or national communities.

For many early twentieth century Finnish immigrants in America, the international socialist movement was one such cross-national community. Scholars have noted how the labor movement connected Finns in America with Finns in Finland and the Soviet Union in many ways.[139] Recent studies which have contested the assumption about Finnish "clannishness" have also noted that the socialist movement connected Finns to other Americans.[140] Yet, the networks of the socialist movement also connected Finnish Americans with ideas and people beyond their ethnic and national confines. Indeed, I will argue that Finnish ideas about race were formed in an interactive process with different intellectual influences, from socialist tenets of internationalism and Darwinist ideas about evolution to lynching coverage of U.S. newspapers and Soviet theories about the nationality question. Relatedly, I

138 Donna Gabaccia: "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History." *Journal of American History*, Vo. 86, No. 3, 1999, pp. 1115–1134; Nancy Foner: *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration.* Yale University Press: New Haven; Peter Kivisto: "Social Spaces, Transnational Immigrant Communities, and the Politics of Incorporation." *Ethnicities*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2003, pp. 5–28; Donna Gabaccia: *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective.* Princeton University Press: Princeton 2012; Kivisto 2014.

139 Kostiainen 1978; Kauranen & Pollari 2011; Kivisto 2014, pp. 301–304.

140 Kaunonen 2011.

argue that Finnish immigrants did not merely adopt the ideas of others. Rather, they creatively, albeit not always originally, combined, interpreted and contested ideas that had various sources.

This dissertation is divided in five chapters that are thematically structured, but which also follow a loose chronology. Chapter 1 examines how the incipient Finnish socialist movement responded to nativist anxieties regarding immigrant assimilability in the early years of the 1900s. It is especially concerned about how Finnish socialists viewed their own nationality in the context of American industrial civilization. Chapter 2 analyzes the Finnish socialists' understanding of and participation in debates on immigration, especially Asian immigration, in the U.S. labor movement and society at large. Chapter 3 assesses the views of radical immigrants towards anti-black violence in the United States. It examines Finnish-American press's coverage of lynchings and race riots, and analyzes more closely Finnish reactions to the 1920 lynchings in Duluth, Minnesota. Chapter 4 studies the radicals' involvement in the Communist Party's campaigns for black rights. It is mostly concentrated on New York where a Finnish communist, August Jokinen, was put before a much-publicized party trial because of his "white chauvinist" conduct in 1931. Chapter 5 discusses the nationalism of the Popular Front, as well as the Finnish nationalist discourse of the Karelian fever, and their influence on Finnish leftist thinking and action.

1. Uplifting the Race: Socialists and the Finnish Self-Image

When reflecting on the early history of Finnish socialism in America, a prominent Finnish-American socialist wrote in 1925 that he regarded the movement's greatest achievement as having turned "beasts of burden into human beings."[141] Finnish socialism in America emerged in the early years of the twentieth century, when political discourse in the United States was taking a nativist turn. The assimilationist optimism of the 1890s, encouraged, for example, by the imperialist euphoria of the Spanish-American War, turned towards pessimism in the early 1900s. The millions of immigrants from southern and eastern parts of Europe, who settled in the urban ghettos and rugged mining towns of industrial America, were deemed to be an uncouth and unassimilable burden in countless academic works, political speeches, newspaper articles and other forums. Theories of cultural degeneration were increasingly linked to immigration.[142] Poor and unskilled Finnish immigrants were very much included in this mass of

141 Syrjälä, F.J. ([1925]): *Historia-aiheita Ameriikan Suomalaisesta Työväenliikkeestä*. Suomal. Sosial. Kust. Yhtiö: Fitchburg, Massachusetts, p. 103. "*S.S. Osastot kasvattivat työjuhdista ihmisiä. Siinä niiden suurin saavutus on.*"

142 John Higham: *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925.* Atheneum: New York 1968, pp. 158–165; Erika Lee: "American Gatekeeping: Race and Immigration Law in the Twentieth Century." In Nancy Foner & & George M. Frederickson (eds.): *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in the United States.* Russell Sage Foundation: New York 2005, pp. 123–127; Daniel E. Bender: *American Abyss: Savagery and Civilization in the Age of Industry*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2009, pp. 2–4, 71–77.

purportedly unassimilable newcomers that had been conjured up by the anti-immigrant discourse. Most troublingly for the incipient Finnish socialist movement, nativism was not only a right-wing tendency, but was also shared by many of their American comrades in unions and the Socialist Party. It was in this context that the idea of making "beasts of burden into human beings" emerged in the Finnish-American socialist movement.

This chapter examines the approach of Finnish socialist activists to the early twentieth-century anti-immigration discourse, which ranked nationalities and races into a hierarchy based on their adaptability to American industrial civilization. Since Finns were commonly grouped together with the purportedly unassimilable Eastern European immigrants, the nativist discourse had a decided influence on Finnish-American discussions on their self-image. Many early Finnish socialists in America were unsure about how they should approach this discourse. Many agreed that the civilizational disposition of Finns diverged significantly from that of the American, but they differed on how Finnish workers should approach this divergence. A significant number of early Finnish socialists in the United States at this time felt that this divergence was unbridgeable. They advocated that Finns should retreat from American industrial civilization and that they should establish their own socialist colony, where industry could be developed based on Finnish cultural and racial traits. Most, however, decried this purportedly pessimistic reading and viewed Finnish immigrants as being capable of being assimilated into American industrial society, as was possible with any other European nationality. They accepted that Finns were at a lower civilizational level, but did not accept that this was a reflection of any unchanging or static racial essence. Sustained and systematic enlightenment could help to elevate the Finnish people from their state of savagery, drunkenness and cultural inertia. Thus, Finnish socialism in America became, in part, a project of racial uplifting.

1.1 Fit for Industrial America?

Between 1870 and 1924, some 389,000 immigrants from Finland arrived in the United States, with around 80 percent staying in the country. Rural Finns were driven to emigrate by many of the same reasons as other Europeans of the time: economic hardship; social pressures, caused by such factors as overpopulation and practices of primogeniture.[143] Just over half of the Finnish immigrants to the United States settled in the Upper Midwest: northern Minnesota, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, northern Wisconsin and some localities in Illinois and Ohio. Minnesota and Michigan emerged as the two states with the most Finnish-born residents. Other major destinations were the northeastern seaboard, especially Massachusetts and New York City, and the Pacific Northwest, where Astoria in Oregon emerged as a center of Western Finnish settlement.[144] Between 1870 and 1914, some two thirds of Finnish migrants were men, but the sex ratio evened

143 Reino Kero: "Migration from Finland to North America." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 41–49.

144 Kero 2014, pp. 49–51; Arnold R. Alanen: "Finnish Settlements in the United States: 'Nesting Places' and Finntowns." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 55–73. Gary Kaunonen: *Finns in Michigan.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2009; Arnold R. Alanen: *Finns in Minnesota.* Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2012; A. William Hoglund: *Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880–1920.* University of Wisconsin Press: Madison 1960.

out in the early 1900s.[145] The 1920 census recorded some 150,000 Finland-born residents in the United States.[146]

The Finnish immigrants who arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries arrived at a time of rapid industrial expansion. This created an ever-increasing demand for labor. The merchant capitalism of the antebellum period was increasingly giving way to modern industrial capitalism. In line with this trend, U.S. companies were increasingly turning to mechanized production processes, and companies no longer needed a steady supply of skilled laborers that had previously been an essential prerequisite of the national economy. In the new mechanized industries, workers were needed to perform simple, routinized tasks that could be quickly learned and mastered. In 1914, Henry Ford remarked that these unskilled jobs were so simple that "the most stupid man can learn [them] in two days."[147]

Most Finnish immigrants were young men from poor rural backgrounds, usually with no experience of industrial labor, and thus took up unskilled jobs at mines and other industries. Minnesota's Iron Range and Michigan's Copper Country were especially significant destinations for Finnish immigrants. However, they also migrated further west, to work at mines in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona and Utah. Besides mining, they sought work in the Pacific Northwest, where there was a demand for labor in the lumber and fishing industries. They also sought work

145 Kero 1974, pp. 91–92. Demographic factors also evened out the sex ratio in the immigrant community. Women generally emigrated at a younger age and had a lower return rate. Death took its toll on men earlier than it did with women. Thus, U.S. censuses of the early twentieth century report a more equal sex ratio for Finland-born residents than the figures for emigrants would suggest: in 1910, 38.7% of Finland-born residents of the United States were women; in 1920, this figure was 43%; and by 1930 it had reached 45.8%.

146 Kero 2014, p. 41.

147 Quoted in Matthew Frye Jacobson: *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876–1917*. Hill & Wang: New York 2001, p. 65.

in Midwestern lumber camps and docks, as well as in Massachusetts's many factories and mills and in the construction industry in New York and other metropolises.[148] Finnish women were also widely employed, especially in cities like New York, Minneapolis, Chicago and Boston, where they mainly worked in domestic service.[149]

The poor, rural and unskilled immigrants who flocked to the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries posed a problem for many contemporary Americans. While the growing industrial sector desperately needed labor, it was less clear how the U.S. as a polity or in cultural terms should welcome the newcomers. It is important to note that industrialization for Americans living in the late 1800s and early 1900s did not simply involve the process of expanding factory production, as well as the rapid proliferation of new mills and mines, and the introduction of new machinery in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, but also a cultural process that profoundly altered the country's intellectual and moral landscape. As Daniel Bender has noted, contemporary observers sensed that industrialization heralded the coming of an entirely new age: the era of industrial civilization. This new age was widely interpreted as being the highest stage of human evolution and its creators – white Anglo-Saxon Americans – were seen as its rightful proprietors. They had supposedly outpaced all other human races through diligence and innovation and brought into being the ultimate testament to human industriousness. Bender notes that "The development of industry was racial progress from savagery to civilization." Many white American observers regard-

148 Kero 1996, pp. 143–191.

149 Kero 1996, pp. 172–182; Carl Ross: "Finnish American Women in Transition, 1910-1920." In Michael G. Karni: *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States.* pp. 239–256; K. Marianne Wargelin Brown: "The Legacy of Mummu's Daughters: Finnish American Women's History." In Carl Ross & K. Marianne Wargelin Brown (eds.): *Women Who Dared: The History of Finnish American Women.* Immigration History Research Center: St. Paul 1986, pp. 14–40.

ed their industrial society as proof of their profound superiority over other races.[150]

There was, however, a significant tension at the heart of this narrative of racial progress and industrialization: the United States needed to bring in laborers from countries that had not shown the potential to take the civilizational step needed to become an industrial society in order to operate the factories, mines and mills that constituted this new industrial economy. Were immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and East Asia fit, then, to assimilate into American society or would their arrival lead to the degeneration of the purity of the only human race that had proven fit to evolve into industrial men?[151]

Anti-immigrant racism was not restricted to the right fringes of the political spectrum. The U.S. socialist movement was hardly immune to the broader trends of anti-immigrant sentiment and racist nativism. The entry of Jewish, Italian, Finnish and Slavic immigrants into the Socialist Party in the early 1900s probably lessened, or at least qualified, socialist nativism against European immigrants within the party. Yet, there were still many prominent U.S. socialists who were deeply suspicious of Southern and Eastern European immigrants, in terms of their fitness to play a constructive role in the socialist movement and in labor organizing. Sally Miller has even argued that the party leadership, composed of native-born, German, and Russian Jewish socialists, "never accepted newer immigrant groups as having potential as union members or as socialists, and therefore never assigned them legitimacy in the class struggle or in the party." Thus, organizational work among Eastern and Southern European immigrants was severely neglected, and immigrant groups had to organize themselves and then win over the leaders of the U.S. party.[152] An illustrative example of these anxieties can be found in the social-

150 Bender 2009, pp. 2–4.

151 Bender 2009, pp. 71–77.

152 Sally M. Miller: "For White Men Only: The Socialist Party of America and Issues of Gender, Ethnicity, and Race." *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* Vol. 2, No. 3, July 2003, pp. 290–291.

ist author Robert Hunter's book *Poverty*, first published in 1904, which decried the immigration to the United States of "the weak and mentally defect [and] unfit" classes of Southern and Eastern Europeans, and warned of race suicide.[153] As Hunter's discussion shows, not even all Marxist socialists in the U.S. were convinced that the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and East Asia could assimilate into American industrial society and the white race.

These questions were also posed by contemporary Finnish observers, both in Finland and the United States. In Finland, the late nineteenth-century press and the religious establishment, which risked losing social control over its fleeing parishioners, made much of the problems faced by their countrymen and countrywomen in North America. Nationalism was gaining ground, and Finnish clergymen and nationalistic newspapers were convinced that emigrants were effectively betraying their native land. These voices only grew louder as immigration exponentially increased at precisely the same time as Russification policies intensified and the fatherland most needed its young men and women. No official ever suggested an outright ban on emigration, but clergymen and government officials constantly spoke of the need to curb out-migration. As part of these efforts a constant flood of articles and speeches depicted the emigrants as immoral deviants and their lives in America as an unfathomable form of debauchery. In 1891, a leading bishop advised the clerical estate in the Finnish Diet to oppose emigration, since it deprived the country of manpower and compromised moral discipline. The bishop lamented that bigamy, drunkenness and other kinds of immorality were rampant among overseas Finns. Seamen's missionaries, who traveled to North America, sent first-hand accounts to Finnish church journals of the deprivation and debauchery that Finnish immigrants had succumbed to in the religiously liberal United

153 Robert Hunter: *Poverty*. The MacMillan Company: New York 1904, pp. 261–277, 316–317. See also Pittenger 1993, pp. 172–173.

States. According to these reports, Finland's reputation abroad was under threat because of this dire situation.[154]

Widespread drunkenness in immigrant communities was often highlighted for particular denunciation. Akseli Järnefelt, a Finnish journalist and author who traveled among Finnish communities in North America in the late 1800s, also bemoaned the untoward behavior of his compatriots:

> People here [in Cape Ann, Massachusetts] drink more than in any other Finnish settlement. More than elsewhere, Finns here have dismal, dirty and badly-kept homes and it is drunkenness that is to blame. Fights and stabbings are not rare. One can meet drunken Finns everywhere. There are no bars in [Cape Ann], which is why they go drinking in Gloucester, and jail cells of that city are often filled with our compatriots, sometimes dozens of them. On the railroad track between Gloucester and Lanesville one could often see the conductor push away drunken Finns who were trying to get in the car. They were left lying on the side of the track, screaming and brawling, while the train sped away, the other passengers scolding Finns in all kinds of ways.[155]

Järnefelt lamented that this wayward and immoral behavior was having a detrimental effect on Finns' image in America. He quoted an article from a local Massachusetts newspaper, in which

154 A. William Hoglund: "No Land for Finns: Critics and Reformers View the Rural Exodus from Finland to America between the 1880s and World War I." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups, & Douglas Ollila, Jr. (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives.* Institute of Migration: Turku 1975, pp. 39–52; Kero 1996, pp. 113–122; A. William Hoglund: "Breaking with Religious Tradition: Finnish Immigrant Workers and the Church, 1890–1915." In Michael Karni (ed.): *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, 27–29. Similar anti-migrant sentiments were also expressed elsewhere. Swedish anti-immigration discussions also had an effect on Finnish discussions (see Hoglund 1975, p. 48). U.S. discussions on the ills of rural migration to cities also bore a resemblance to Finnish debates. See Hoglund 1975, pp. 52–53.

155 Akseli Järnefelt: *Suomalaiset Amerikassa*. Otava: Helsinki 1898, p. 57.

a reader wrote to the editor and asked whether "those barbarians [local Finnish immigrants] actually have human souls." This prompted the editor to contend that while Finns were "truly people, not beasts," they were "at the lowest stage of development."[156] Thus, for many Finnish observers it seemed apparent that rural, lower-class Finns were not suited to the challenges they faced in America's industrial society. Unlike their American contemporaries, who were also losing faith in immigrants' fitness to assimilate, they laid much of the blame on U.S. society itself, particularly emphasizing the detrimental effects of its Godless secularism and unchaste liberalism. Yet, they did not let Finnish immigrants off the hook either. For many clergymen and middle-class journalists, the social problems of rural, working-class Finns in America seemed to confirm their conviction about the low level of cultural evolution of common people. This sentiment was particularly strong in the Finnish nationalist movement, which both idealized and pathologized the poor Finnish-speaking population of the countryside.[157]

The problems linked to adapting to the demands of life in industrial America were increasingly addressed by the immigrants themselves. From the 1880s, temperance and workingmen's reformist organizations, for example, started to spring up everywhere in areas of America with sizeable Finnish populations. Scholarship on Finnish Americans has traditionally emphasized how immigrant organizations emerged out of the community's own internal needs. The immigrants' need to preserve their language, religion and cultural traditions has been deemed a major motive behind the establishment of Lutheran, temperance and workingmen's organizations in the late nineteenth century. The halls and churches associated with these associations became safe havens for these immigrants in a culturally-hostile environment. In these spaces they could continue to speak and pray in their own language and live according to their purportedly age-old tra-

156 Järnefelt 1898. See also Sulkanen 1951, p. 46–47; Kivisto 1984, p. 127.

157 Kokko: 2008, pp. 297–320.

ditions. Temperance lodges also helped the newly-arrived, who were often baffled by the reality of everyday life in the United States, to resist the temptations offered up by liberal America.[158]

These internal cultural and social community needs undoubtedly played a significant role in the establishment of these organizations, but the temperance and workingmen's organizations, in particular, were also a response to external influences; namely, the intensifying societal debate about new immigrants' fitness to assimilate. Temperance societies and workingmen's aid associations attempted to showcase to Americans that Finns were, indeed, capable of weathering the challenges of their new environment and emerge as sober, civilized citizens of an industrial society. Not all immigrants were convinced, however, that such fitness was possible or indeed desirable.

1.2. The Sointula Experiment: Escape from Industrial America

While the early reformist workingmen's organizations were preoccupied with helping Finnish immigrant workers to cope with the aspects of U.S. society that seemed strange to newcomers, not all workers were convinced that they wanted to adapt to industrial America. Many became severely disillusioned with the country they now found themselves in, and vented their frustrations to each other and in letters they sent back to Finland. The work they carried out in mines was hard and hazardous and their wages were inadequate. Moreover, their living arrangements were deplorable, and they suffered from tuberculosis, mental illness and social problems.[159]

In British Columbia, where hundreds of Finns had migrated between 1880 and 1900 in order to work in the mines of Nanaimo, Extension, North Wellington and Ladysmith, these frustra-

158 Kero 1997, pp. 51–66.

159 Kero 1996, pp. 193–208.

tions led to the formation of an organized movement that aimed to establish an alternative, non-industrial community in the Southwest Canadian wilderness. In late 1901, a group of Finnish miners and other immigrants acquired a piece of land from the Canadian government on Malcolm Island, north of Vancouver Island, where they established a utopian socialist community named *Sointula* ["Place of Harmony"]. The community started to actively seek recruits among the Finnish industrial workers by offering lofty promises. *Sointula* was to become a self-sustaining socialist economy that would involve farming, fishing, lumbering and manufacturing, but where workers would be freed from the ire of capitalist exploitation. Away from the polyglot melting pot that was industrial America, Finnish workers would supposedly be able to build a form of socialism that best suited their national character and linguistic needs. By the summer of 1902, some 120 Finnish immigrants had made the trip to Malcolm Island. At its peak in 1903, the community sustained over three hundred residents, with many more weighing-up whether to move to the British Columbian wilderness. While the experiment was soon confronted with major financial and social problems, and quietly withered away after 1905, its philosophy was among the most debated and contentions issues in the early 1900s within the incipient Finnish-American labor movement.[160]

The philosophy behind the *Sointula* experiment became known as "Kurikkaism," (*kurikkalaisuus*), after its main ideologue, Matti Kurikka, who had been invited to North America

160 The Sointula experiment has interested historians in Canada and Finland for a long time. For general accounts, see Matti Halminen: *Sointula. Kalevan Kansan ja Kanadan suomalaisten historiaa.* Mikko Ampuja: Mikkeli 1936; John I. Kolehmainen: "Harmony Island: A Finnish Utopian Venture in British Columbia." *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1941, pp. 111–123; John I. Kolehmainen: "The Last Days of Matti Kurikka's Utopia: A Historical Vignette." In Pentti Virrankoski, Matti Lauerma, Kalervo Hovi & Keijo Virtanen (eds.): *Turun Historiallinen Arkisto 31*. Vammalan Kirjapaino: Vammala 1975, pp. 388–396; Paula Ward: *Sointula: Island Utopia.* Harbour: Madeira Park 1995; Donald J. Wilson: "Matti Kurikka and the Settlement of Sointula, British Columbia, 1901–1905." *Finnish-Americana*, Vol. 3, 1980, pp. 6–29.

in 1900 in order to lead the utopian experiment. Upon his arrival in America, Kurikka was already a well-known figure within the Finnish labor movement. He was admired by some and reviled by others. He had been born into a well-to-do peasant family in 1863 in Russian Ingria, a Finnish-speaking region near St. Petersburg, and had moved to Helsinki to study in the 1870s. In Helsinki he became acquainted with nationalist, socialist, Theosophist and Darwinist literature, and emerged as an enthusiastic activist in the burgeoning workers' movement, serving as the editor of the Social Democratic organ *Työmies* in Helsinki between 1897 and 1899. Kurikka's political philosophy was an eclectic mix of socialism, nationalism and Theosophy, which made him the target of both right-wing and left-wing critics.[161] Bourgeois nationalists derided Kurikka for supposedly being an advocate of appeasement in the face of growing Russian incursions. They frequently attributed Kurikka's purported Russophilia to his Ingrian background.[162] Marxist socialists, who were gaining the upper hand in the Finnish labor movement at this time, viewed Kurikka's Theosophy as being anathema to the tenets of scientific and materialist socialism. In 1899, Kurikka left Finland for Australia, where he tried to build a socialist community among local Finnish immigrants. Having failed in this effort, he accepted the invitation he received in 1900 from Finnish socialists in British Columbia. During his time in North America between 1900 and 1905, he emerged as one of the main ideologues of the burgeoning Finnish-American labor movement. He gained a wide audience for his ideas through the Nanaimo-based *Aika* ("Time") newspaper and undertook popular lecture tours in Finnish-American immigrant communities. Even the Marxist Finnish-American socialists who reviled his ideas and character had to formulate their ideas against Kurikka's popular brand of utopian socialism.[163]

161 Kalevi Kalemaa: *Matti Kurikka – Legenda jo eläessään.* WSOY: Porvoo, pp. 101–132.

162 Kalemaa 1978, p. 33.

163 Matti Kurikka has intrigued scholars for a long time. Recently, Finnish labor and cultural historians have been especially attracted to his cross-bor-

The *Sointula* experiment drew on the American and international socialist discourse on so-called colonization.[164] This proved to be appealing for many immigrants because it seemed to offer a way out of a form of industrial society that increasingly made them feel unwelcome. Kurikka's escapist utopianism struck a chord among many disillusioned newcomers. Whereas temperance societies, reformist workingmen's associations and Marxist socialists argued that Finnish workers could and should make their peace with American industrial civilization, Kurikka formulated a different answer to the question of Finnish adaptability: the Finnish and American national characters were incompatible. Consequently, Finns should abandon all efforts to assimilate. In 1901, Kurikka wrote in his *Aika* newspaper: "When a Finn for the first time finds himself in a part of the world where the English language dominates, he will surely notice that he has come farther from his homeland than he could have imagined upon departure." According to Kurikka, time spent learning the new thinking patterns and customs was time wasted because the difference between Finns and Americans came down to their racial essence. Referring to their differing head shapes, he contended that native English-speakers were smart and brave, whereas Finns were superior in terms of perseverance and conscientiousness. The two peoples could not change each other's essence, which is why it was best for Finns to leave American society and halt their

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der life and to the eclectic ideological influences in his philosophy. See Kalemaa 1978; Irene Virtala: "Matti Kurikka. Siirtolaiskirjailija ja feministi". *Siirtolaisuus – Migration*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1997, pp. 16–22; Mikko Pollari: "Teosofia ja 1900-luvun alun suomalaisen ja amerikansuomalaisen työväenliikkeen transatlanttiset yhteydet." In Sakari Saaritsa & Kirsi Hänninen (eds.): *Työväki maahanmuuttajina.* Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura: Jyväskylä 2012, pp. 46–69; Anne Heimo, Mikko Pollari, Anna Rajavuori, Kirsti Salmi-Nikander, Mikko-Olavi Seppälä & Sami Suodenjoki: "Matti Kurikka – A Prophet in His Own Country and Abroad." *Siirtolaisuus – Migration.* Vol. 43, No. 3, December 2016, pp. 6–10.

164 On these discussions in the Social Democracy Party in the late 1890s and Eugene V. Debs's defense of colonization, see Nick Salvatore: *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1982, pp. 162–166.

efforts to change it. Kurikka maintained that "we cannot change the English-speakers (*toiskieliset*) to something they are not."[165]

Kurikka's strict division between Finnish and English-speaking civilizations drew on contemporary discussions within Finnish nationalist discourse. In these debates, the position of Finland and Finns, with regard to Westernness, was a contentious issue. The Finnish nationalist movement of the time was divided into so-called Young Finns and Old Finns, who both saw Finnish culture as a mixture of imported (Western) and indigenous (Finnish) ingredients. They disagreed, however, as to which part should be emphasized in the make-up of a future Finland. While the Young Finns celebrated Western contributions as enlivening and civilizing influences on the purportedly backward Finland, the Old Finns associated Western culture with the centuries-long Swedish rule over the Finnish-speaking peasantry. Thus, they deemed it to be a foreign and corrupting influence on indigenous Finnishness. Hence, Western culture was perceived by them as an *other* against which images of Finnishness were built.[166]

Kurikka, who came of age as a University of Helsinki student in the 1880s, formed his conceptions of Finnishness amid these discussions. Consequently, he became an avid defender of authentic Finnishness cleansed of foreign influences. This is evident, for example, in his early play, *Viimeinen ponnistus* ("The Last Struggle") from 1884. Set in his native Ingria during the emancipation of the serfs in the 1860s, the play celebrated the perseverance of Finnish culture under tsarist rule and the pressures to Russianize. It condemned miscegenation between Finns and Russians as racial contamination.[167] In America, English civilization supposedly presented a similar threat to Finnishness as Russianness had done in Finland and Ingria. Indeed, Americans' lack of conscien-

165 Matti Kurikka: "Suomalaiset ja 'toiskieliset'" *Aika*, N:o 25, 25.10.1901.

166 Kokko 2008, p. 307.

167 Mikko-Olavi Seppälä: "Performing Ingrian Finnish Identity: Kurikka's Early Years and Debut as a Playwright." Presentation at the FinnForum XI Conference in Turku, Finland, 30.9.2016. The play remained popular in Finnish workers' theaters until the 1920s.

tiousness, honesty and gentleness reminded Kurikka of Russian bureaucracy; Finns would do well to reject both influences as foreign to their authentic national selves.[168]

Kurikka's racial thinking was also influenced by Theosophy, a millennial religious movement and a significant ideological current in the turn-of-the-century Finnish labor movement.[169] Theosophist doctrine was premised on the idea that all world religions were expressions of the same core truths, which had been hidden under layers of superfluous scripture and the corrupt obfuscation of the clergy. It was the task of Theosophists to cut through this deception in order to expose the shared truths and the common origin of humanity. As Colin Kidd has noted, this ecumenical inclusiveness and theological universalism gave Theosophy an air of "decidedly anti-racist spirituality," but this egalitarian ambition also had limits. Building on a spiritualist interpretation of Darwinism, Theosophist theology accepted a racial scale that put white Europeans at the top of the evolutionary hierarchy.[170] In these rankings, Finns were associated more with the Eastern races – or "Atlanteans" in Theosophist parlance – than with the Aryans. Helena Blavatsky, the co-founder of The Theosophical Society, associated the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* with Eastern spirituality and described Finns using the same Orientalist exoticism that she deployed in her broader discussions of Eastern spiritual wisdom. For Blavatsky, Finns were "a wonderfully simple nation, still untouched by civilization's varnish," who lived "close to Nature, in perfect touch and harmony with all her living powers and forces."[171] The Theosophist association of Finns with

168 Matti Kurikka: "Suomalaiset ja 'toiskieliset.'" *Aika*, 25.10.1901.

169 Pollari 2012.

170 Colin Kidd: *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2006, p. 237.

171 H. P. Blavatsky: "The National Epoch of Finland." *Lucifer*, Vol. 3, No. 14, October 1888, pp. 149–152.

Asia reflected the wider racial theorizations of the late nineteenth century.[172]

The *Sointula* philosophy was a mix of particularist and universalist tenets. Following the Theosophist notion of a universal human brotherhood, Kurikka maintained that his experiment was in service of the whole of humanity and that the colony on Malcolm Island would be the first of many. Kurikka maintained that other nationalities would be sure to set up their own socialist communities based on the *Sointula* model.[173] Indeed, while the Sointula colony aimed for self-sustenance, Kurikka did not shun co-operation between nationalities. Malcolm Island was chosen as the site of the colony partly because of its good connections to the mainland.[174] In his writings, Kurikka also warned about how a chauvinist contempt for other races could be a deterrent against learning new things.[175] One veteran of the community later reminisced about Sointula's universalism in the following manner: "Let us remember that our […] purpose was to guide the world's workers to liberate themselves from the shackles of capitalism. To show them hands-on how it's done."[176] While this characterization partly reflected the hindsight of a Kurikka's follower, who later turned to Marxism, it still contained more than a kernel of truth. The philosophy of Sointula was premised on universalist notions of human brotherhood that were not only drawn from socialist thought, but also from Theosophy.

172 Aira Kemiläinen: *Suomalaiset, outo Pohjolan kansa: Rotuteoriat ja kansallinen identiteetti.* SHS: Helsinki 1993; Aira Kemiläinen: *Finns in the Shadow of the Aryans: Race Theories and Racism.* Finnish Historical Society: Helsinki 1998.

173 Kalemaa 1978, p. 134.

174 A.B. Mäkelä: "Muutama muistosana 'Kalevan Kansa' -vainaasta." In *Lehtipaja. Työmiehen neljännesvuosisatajulkaisu.* Työmies Society: Superior 1928, p. 147.

175 Matti Kurikka: "Tyhmän ylpeys" *Aika*, 4.4.1902.

176 Mäkelä 1928, p. 147. See also K.S.: "Sointulan S.S. Osasto Malkosaarella, B.C." In *Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917.* Toveri Press: Astoria 1917, p. 111.

This universalist ethos was undercut, however, by Sointula's cult of national essence. Theosophist philosophy sought to reveal the so-called core truths behind world religions and philosophies. Indeed, Theosophist thinkers were preoccupied with the idea of essence: that humans in general, and races in particular, had a characteristic nature that was hidden by superficial cultural and scriptural layers.[177] The nationalist discourse of the Old Finns in contemporary Finland was similarly fixated on essence.[178] This preoccupation with essence was also evident in Kurikka's thinking on nationality, religion and race. According to Kurikka, the essential character of Finns could be found in the national epic, *Kalevala*, but it had been suppressed by the Church since the time of the crusades. The pre-Christian nature of the Finns still existed under the cover of a Church-built façade, which meant that the liberation of the Finnish national spirit required the abolition of the Church.[179]

Illustrative of this mix of universalist and particularistic reasoning is Kurikka's attitude towards the indigenous Kwakiuti tribe, who inhabited Malcolm Island and its environs when the Finnish settlers arrived. According to one communitydweller, Kurikka instructed the Finnish settlers to develop friendly relations with the local tribe. The Kwakiuti were important trading partners with Sointula Finns, providing the island community with meat and fish. But Kurikka also explained the ideological reasons for developing friendly relations with the indigenous population: good relations with the Kwakiuti were necessitated by the principle of universal human brotherhood, but also because the local tribe may have originated from the same Asian steppes as the Finns.[180]

177 Kidd 2006, pp. 237-244.

178 Kokko 2008.

179 Mikko Pollari: "Vihan ja sovun sosialistit". In Anu-Hanna Anttila, Ralf Kauranen, Olli Löytty, Mikko Pollari, Pekka Rantanen & Petri Ruuska: *Kuriton kansa. Poliittinen mielikuvitus vuoden 1905 suurlakon Suomessa*. Vastapaino: Tampere 2009, pp. 94–95.

180 Evert Savela: *Suomesta Sointulaan. Siirtolaiselämän kuvauksia.* Työmies Society: Superior [1942], pp. 72, 79–80. On Finnish-Native American re-

For Kurikka, then, the grounds for solidarity between Finns and Native Americans was built on both the universal notion of human brotherhood and a supposed racial bond.

Drawing on Finnish nationalism, socialism and Theosophy, Kurikka constructed an ideology that resonated with many Finnish-American workers who had become disillusioned with industrial America. As John Kolehmainen and others have argued, the appeal of the Sointula experiment can be partly explained by the yearning of Finnish immigrant workers for a home-like cultural and natural environment.[181] Yet, we should also recognize that this isolationist philosophy did not resonate in an ideological vacuum. In a political context in which doubts about the ability of immigrants to adapt to the industrial economy, democratic citizenship and Anglo-Saxon whiteness were gaining currency, Kurikka's philosophy offered an appealing counter-narrative for many newly-arrived Finns. Kurikka conceded that some of the nativist doubts about Finnish workers' inability to integrate with the industrial civilization were valid. Yet, rather than seeking to alter this state of affairs by encouraging his compatriots to assimilate, Kurikka saw the purported inability of Finns to assimilate into American society, as well as its economy and race as a virtue. Drawing on an eclectic mix of socialism, nationalism and Theosophy, Kurikka and his followers contended that the inability of Finns to adapt to life in mines, factories and urban residential neighborhoods was not because of their inferiority, but reflected, rather, their fundamentally different, and in many ways superior, mindset and racial character. Kurikka's philosophy offered a strategy to cope with the increasing racial stigmatization of Eastern European immigrant workers.

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lations in Sointula, also see A. B. McKela: "Koti-juttuja Sointulasta." *Aika*, 1.1.1904.

181 Kolehmainen 1941; 1975.

1.3. Reaching Out: Marxists and the Nationality Question

Sointula's appeal proved limited. By 1904, it had more or less ran its course. The experiment's decline was partly due to financial and social troubles within the colony. Agriculture and other spheres of its economy had proved unproductive and personal disagreements threatened to tear apart the close-knit island community. Kurikka himself started to attract ire, even from his admirers because of his obstinate personality and promiscuity.[182] He left Sointula in the fall of 1904 and returned to Finland in September 1905.[183] However, more detrimental to Sointula and Kurikka than these financial and social setbacks was the ideological critique meted out against them by Marxist socialists.

A major part of Marxist criticism of utopian socialists focused on the latter's lack of internationalism. Kurikka was accused of being a parochial nationalist, whose Sointula experiment went against the internationalist tenets of the world labor movement. In October 1904, for example, when the leadership of Sointula sent a circular to Finnish-American labor associations and to the *Työmies* newspaper asking Finnish immigrants who wanted to "preserve our nationality and our language" to migrate to Sointula,[184] the response was frosty. In a public response to the circular, the San Francisco Finnish workers' association directed its ire towards the letter's nationalist politics in a way that illustrates the contours of the criticism emanating from Social Democratic

182 On gender relations in Sointula and Kurikka's attitude towards women, see Varpu Lindström: "Utopia for Women? The Sointula Experiment, 1901–1905." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2000, pp. 4–25.

183 Kurikka arrived in Finland when the country was in the midst of political upheavals following the 1905 Russian Revolution. Kurikka emerged as a leading activist in the so-called Great Strike of Finland in the fall of 1905. He returned to North America in 1907, but did not gain the influence he had had in the early 1900s. He served as the editor of the bourgeois nationalist *New Yorkin Uutiset* newspaper until his death in 1915. See Pollari et al. 2008, pp. 43–45; Heimo et al. 2016.

184 Kalevan Kansan johtokunta: "Toverit, tulkaa Sointulaan!" *Työmies*, 4.10. 1904.

quarters. The response to the circular stressed that the struggle for the perseverance of nationality in an immigrant society was futile, since all children of immigrants would eventually learn the language and customs of their adopted country, and would forget about their parents' homeland. In North America, the offspring of Finnish parents would grow up to be workers, capitalists or priests, and they would then continue their struggle against each other according to their class position in society. The letter penned in response to the circular magniloquently declared that "The era of nationalities is over. It will be followed by an era of struggle between labor and capital, from which a new era will begin, the era of humans. There will be no nationalities or religions."[185]

Indeed, it might seem easy to portray the debate between utopian socialists like Kurikka and Marxist socialists as a simple confrontation between nationalism and internationalism, or nation-focused socialists versus class-focused socialists. However, this would severely distort the contours of the discussion and would underestimate the hold that national thinking (and univeralist thinking) had on *both* sides of the debate. We should not accept at face value the Marxist claims that they were beyond nationalism. Instead, we should more closely examine just what they meant by concepts like internationalism and nationality. A closer look at Finnish-American Marxist thinking reveals that ideas of nationality were central also in their argumentation and political action.[186]

185 San Franciscon Suomalainen Socialisti klubi: "Vastinetta Kalevan Kansan johtokunnan kiertokirjeeseen 'Toverit, tulkaa Sointulaan.'" *Työmies*, 18.10.1904. See also, for example, A.F. Lappi: *Taistele ja voita.* Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock, Mich. 1905, pp. 8–10; D.P.: "Isänmaallisuusko meille hyve?" *Työmies*, 22.8.1907; "Sosialidemokratian kansainvälisyys." *Työmies*, 29.10.1907.

186 For a similar argument regarding the nationality question within the Finnish socialist movement, see Jouko Heikkilä *Kansallista luokkapolitiikkaa. Sosiaalidemokraatit ja Suomen autonomian puolustus 1905–1917.* Historiallisia tutkimuksia 168. SHS: Helsinki 19931993, pp. 19, 27–28.

The influence of Finnish Social Democracy and its debates on nationality were central in the early Finnish-American socialist movement. The Finnish Labor Party was established in 1899 in the midst of heated debates on Finland's political position vis-à-vis Russia. From the late 1890s, the tsarist authorities in St. Petersburg sought to curtail Finland's autonomy within the Russian Empire. In this political climate, socialists in Finland became active in the struggle to retain the Grand Duchy's autonomy. The party's founding program defined the party as "patriotic and national, but not chauvinistic" and identified Finland's aspiration to achieve national self-determination as a prerequisite for the economic and social emancipation of the Finnish people.[187] Even as Marxist socialists gained the upper hand in the party over their more heterodox competitors, the struggle against Russian incursions against Finnish autonomy remained an important part of socialist activism. The Social Democratic Party (the party had changed its name in 1903, as it adopted a Marxist program) sought to defend Finnish autonomy in a peaceful and conciliatory manner, but there emerged also more violent activism on the fringes of the socialist movement. Indeed, the immigration of many Finnish socialist activists to America in the early 1900s must be understood in this context. As many socialist activists appeared in the crosshairs of the notorious Okhrana, the tsarist secret police, they sought political refuge in North America in the early twentieth century. A perennial question in studies of the Finnish-American labor movement has been why Finns, in particular, flocked so readily to leftist causes in America. Their susceptibility to labor radicalism resulted, in part, from the rugged conditions in the American mining industry and in other unskilled labor markets. However, a significant additional factor in the rapid emergence of socialism among Finns was the inflow of seasoned socialist organizers and activists from Finland.[188]

187 Heikkilä 1993, pp. 25–39.

188 For discussion of this issue, see Reino Kero: "The Roots of Finnish-American Left-Wing Radicalism." In Vilho Niitemaa (ed.): *Publications of the Institute of General History, University of Turku, Finland*. Kirjapaino Poly-

These socialist emigres from Finland helped to steer the Finnish-American socialist movement towards Marxist socialism. By 1904, the ideological struggle in the Hancock-based *Työmies* newspaper had culminated in Marxist socialists gaining control of the editorial board.[189] When a new socialist newspaper, *Raivaaja*, was established in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1904, it immediately became a vehicle for Marxist ideas. In 1903, the first Finnish workers' federations were established in Massachusetts (The America's Finnish Workers' Federation Imatra) and Minnesota (The American Finnish Workers' Federation). Both of these federations remained outside of the Socialist Party, but the question of their association with American socialists soon emerged as a major point of contention. In October 1904, when the two federations merged at a convention in Cleveland, the partisans of Marxist socialism emerged victorious and urged local associations to seek membership in the Socialist Party. This proved cumbersome. Consequently, in the fall of 1906 the socialist associations established a new umbrella organization, the Finnish Socialist Federation, which joined the Socialist Party as the party's first and largest foreign-language federation. Thus, by the fall of 1906, Theosophy and other non-Marxist strains of socialism had been pushed to the outer margins of the Finnish-American labor movement.[190]

Ideas of nationality and internationalism featured heavily in the debates between Marxist socialists and their adversaries. The

typos: Turku 1973, pp. 45–55; Kivisto 1984, pp. 37–70. These transnational links were not specific to the leftism of Finnish immigrants. On the connections between early Italian and Italian-American socialism and anarchism, for example, see Topp 2001, pp. 27–57.

189 Sulkanen 1951, p. 77–78. On the development of this ideological debate, see Pollari 2009. The debate between Marxist socialists and Kurikka was decidedly trans-Atlantic in character, as Mikko Pollari has noted. Many of the central actors in this debate, Kurikka included, spent time in the early 1900s in Finland and North America. Thus, it is not easy to distinguish between "Finnish" and "Finnish American" labor movements. See Pollari 2012, pp. 46–69. See also Kauranen & Pollari 2011, pp. 26–49.

190 Sulkanen 1951, pp. 75–83.

Marxist socialists had to defend themselves against accusations of not being patriotic and of bringing the Finnish nationality to shame in America. They countered these critiques by pointing to the necessity of international associations, but also by stressing their own patriotism, representing scientific socialism as the truest form of patriotism. These appeals to patriotism were not only a strategic device, calibrated to draw ignorant workers into the fold of the class-based socialist movement, where they could be supposedly cured of their false nationalistic consciousness. Rather, these ideas drew on the socialist understanding of patriotism, which had developed within the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the broader European socialist movement in the early 1900s. Finnish Social Democrats argued that social and political reforms were necessary not only because of class interests, but because of the national best. Only by improving the lot of the whole population, not only the upper elite, could the nation fulfill its whole potential. This was also why Finland's Social Democratic Party deemed it so important to defend Finland's autonomous position against Russian imperial incursions. The defense of Finnish autonomy was deemed as a precondition for the necessary social and political reforms. As Jouko Heikkilä notes, this understanding of socialism as patriotism informed the thinking of even the most avowedly internationalist Finnish socialists.[191]

The association between socialism and patriotism was not only a Finnish quirk, but reflected the broader ideological developments within the European socialist movement. As nationalist sentiments and parties gathered strength in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, socialists in Germany, France, Russia, Austria and other countries were forced to rethink their dismissive attitudes regarding nationalism. Revisionist socialists, like Eduard Bernstein in Germany and Jean Jaurés in France, argued that the spread of democracy would naturally strengthen workers' ties to their homelands. Bernstein reflected that the worker with political and social rights "will have a fa-

191 Heikkilä 1993, pp. 26–29.

therland without therefore ceasing to be a citizen of the world."[192] Even socialists who adhered more firmly to Marxist orthodoxy tempered their proletarian internationalism. Especially in multinational polities, such as the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, socialists recognized that national divisions could not be wished away. Thus, they sought to accommodate their socialism with national divisions. The Austrian socialists, for example, argued for a reorganized Habsburg Empire that would recognize the cultural and national rights of its many minority communities.[193] Russian socialists were more divided in their approaches to the national question, but most Russian socialists also understood that socialists should not trample on national rights. Indeed, the separateness of the Finnish Social Democratic Party from the Russian Social Democratic Party was rarely questioned by Russian socialists.[194] The Finnish socialists' conceptions of nationality were especially influenced by German discussions. German socialists like Karl Kautsky made a distinction between bourgeois and proletarian patriotism. The latter was depicted as the proper kind of love for one's nation: free from chauvinism against other nationalities, in harmony with internationalist causes and determined to elevate the wellbeing of all citizens, not just the upper echelons of society.[195] Karl Kautsky's pamphlet on socialism and patriotism, which elucidated these principles of proletarian, an-

192 Eduard Bernstein: *The Preconditions of Socialism.* Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1993, p. 164. See also Sheri Berman: *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2006, pp. 60–62.

193 Berman 2006, pp. 62–65.

194 Antti Kujala: *Vallankumous ja kansallinen itsemääräämissoikeus: Venäjän sosialistiset puolueet ja suomalainen radikalismi vuosisadan alussa.* SHS: Helsinki 1989; To be sure, the Bolsheviks hoped that the Finnish party, and other parties of national minorities, would eventually join the Russian party, but even they did not insist on this development. Heikkilä 1993, pp. 47–48.

195 Heikkilä 1993, p. 29.

ti-chauvinist and internationalist patriotism, was translated to Finnish in 1911.[196]

The striving to conciliate between national and international solidarities was evident also in the Finnish-American socialist press. N. R. af Ursin, one of the key ideologues of socialist patriotism in Finland, for example, wrote in 1903 about the socialist position on the nationality question in the Hancock-based *Työmies*. He clarified the socialist position on nationality by distinguishing the purportedly noble "national ideology" (*kansallisuusaate*) from its corrupted version, "chauvinism, jingoism [and] extremism (*yltiöpäisyys*)." Whereas the former was characteristic of Europe's smaller nationalities, who simply sought to connect "people who spoke the same language into common activities," the latter was distinctive to more powerful nations, who sought to bring smaller nationalities under their control. In such an unequal world, af Ursin urged little nationalities to do their utmost in opposing the chauvinism of the larger nationalities. In doing this, little nationalities needed inner coherence, which meant that no groups or classes within the nationality should be oppressed by other sections of the nationality. This was of course an argument for socialist reform: "To put it short, those with limited means need to be helped and their power increased, so that the power of the whole nation would strengthen." Only a nation that increased the material wellbeing of all of its members could face an outer threat, while a nation with a discontented population would surely be susceptible to foreign agitation. Indeed, the rise of the workers to societal power was a natural phase in a nation's history. Just like the French Revolution had brought equality to the bourgeoisie, the current struggle would emancipate the toiling strata. Af Ursin did not present this "national ideology" as contradictive of internationalism. Rather, just like socialism would unite the people of one nation into "a fraternal union," it would also bring nationalities together on the world scale. Continuing with the family met-

196 Karl Kautsky: *Sosialidemokratia ja isänmaallisuus*. Suomen sos. dem. nuorisoliitto: Helsinki 1911. On the connection of socialism with nationalism in Germany, see also Berman 2006, pp. 60–65.

aphor, af Ursin noted that "Every nation, no matter how small, is the brother and sister of all nations, even the largest of them."[197]

As Finnish-American socialists continued to face criticism for their purported anti-patriotism, the publishing house of *Työmies* put out a pamphlet on the nationality question in 1906. The pamphlet was written by Alex Halonen, a socialist activist and a journalist at the *Työmies.* Halonen had lived in the United States intermittently since 1895, and had acquired an interest in socialist politics and theory. In 1899, he joined the Socialist Labor Party, and was involved in the establishment of the first Finnish socialist newspaper in New York in 1900. After that, he lectured on socialism among Finnish immigrants and worked as a journalist in different newspapers.[198] His 1906 pamphlet on the nationality question, which ranks as the most thorough early twentieth-century examination of the issue by a Finnish-American socialist, encapsulated the core ideas of Finnish-American socialists regarding nationality. For Halonen, nationalities were a fact of nature, "one of humanity's many families," which had emerged naturally as human beings had interacted with their environment. Socialists recognized the reality of nationalities and worked mostly within the confines of their own nationality. Nationalities were not, however, unchangeable entities with permanent national spirit, as bourgeois nationalists claimed. Rather, the character of nationalities was in a constant state of development as the nationalities interacted with economic forces. Capitalism brought nationalities into ever closer proximity, which also changed the character of nationalities and their mutual relationships. As the economic life became globally integrated, class interests would inevitably replace national interests as catalysts of politics. The capitalist class had already developed an international consciousness, and the working classes were sure to follow. This would ultimately remove nationality from the sphere of politics to the sphere of private life. Indeed, the nationalist skirmishes taking place in the

197 N. R. af Ursin: "Suuret ja pienet kansat", *Amerikan suomalainen työmies*, 9.12.1903.

198 Hoglund 1977, 40; Sulkanen 1951, pp. 353–354.

contemporary world were but the death rattle of a forlorn age. In Halonen's view, the end-result of historical development was the ideal of universal humanity, which was composed of the rich elements gathered from different parts of the globe.[199] National and international belonging were not represented as conflicting sets of identification, but as being in harmony with each other: the particular qualities of different nationalities would contribute to the betterment of the whole humanity, as the inevitable laws of history had removed national bickering and chauvinism from the realm of politics. Socialism was thus the truest form of patriotism since it would help to harness the whole intellectual potential of the nation and to purify national sentiment from corrupting elements, such as chauvinism and national violence.

There were two key ideas in Halonen's pamphlet, which would continue to inform Finnish-American socialist thinking on nationality for much of the later decades. First was the idea that noble and benign forms of national belonging could and should be separated from corrupted forms of national sentiment, such as chauvinism. Thus, the usage of national divisions in political work was not necessarily to be frowned upon, if political actions, which were national in form, could be harmoniously connected to the wider goals of the international socialist movement. It made sense, for example, to support the self-determinacy of smaller nationalities even though the national or race hatred of the more powerful nations was condemned. Second, Halonen's association of internationalism with progress and modernity would prove of continuing significance. In the later years, the self-described internationalists in the socialist movement frequently interpreted the question of nationality in terms of progress, modernity and civilization. Those "hall socialists" who supposedly opposed increased interethnic contacts were cast as parochial and backward, while building connections to non-Finnish workers was viewed as a progressive endeavor. By framing co-operation with non-Finnish workers as imperative for progress, the socialist press and ac-

199 Alex Halonen: *Sosialismin perusteet*. Raivaajan kirjapaino: [Fitchburg] 1907, p. 48–49.

tivists made a powerful case against those non-Marxist socialists who were hesitant to associate Finnish workingmen's associations with the Socialist Party and American labor organizations.

Indeed, as the Finnish socialist movement started to organize, it put a strong emphasis on the need to develop ties to the broader U.S. socialist movement. As Gary Kaunonen has noted, these efforts to reach beyond the linguistic community have often been sidelined in studies of Finnish "ethnic" radicalism in the United States.[200] Wider scholarship on the U.S. Left has hardly been more prescient in examining these interethnic connections. Michael Kazin, for example, has dismissed the wider influence of Finnish-American socialists in the United States: "[T]heir network could have been located in the environs of Helsinki, for all the impression it made on other Americans."[201] This compartmentalizing of "ethnic" radicals from the mainstream workers' movement obscures the very real connections that the immigrant socialists fostered with the broader U.S. labor movement. As Michael Miller Topp has noted of Italian syndicalists in the U.S., immigrant radicals played "critical roles in their communities," but were also instrumental in orchestrating mass protests and strikes that had far broader appeal.[202]

The same was true of the Finnish socialists in those areas where they formed a significant section of the radical movement. Already in its first issue in 1899, the *Amerikan Suomalainen Työmies* ("America's Finnish Workingman"), the first major Finnish-language socialist newspaper in America, declared itself the defender of international socialism and encouraged its readers to engage with the wider American labor movement: "We will impress on our citizens the importance of joining labor unions, getting their citizenship papers, and partaking in the political life of [the United States]."[203] After its foundation in 1906, the Finnish So-

200 Kaunonen 2011, p. 84.

201 Michael Kazin: *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation.* Alfred A. Knopf: New York 2011, p. 161.

202 Topp 2001, p. 21.

203 Quoted in Sulkanen 1951, pp. 66–67.

cialist Federation "adopted a policy of multi-ethnic cooperation by training agitators to spread the socialist message among other foreign workers who did not speak English." It formed contacts with the Socialist Party, and soon officially affiliated with it, but also maintained close relationships with the Western Federation of Miners and the IWW.[204]

Indeed, when the Finnish Socialist Federation held its first convention in Hibbing, Minnesota, it sought to demonstrate that the federation was not merely a "national" institution, but sought to make its mark on the American movement. In discussions on religion, the position of farmers, and prohibition, demands and appeals were, as a rule, made to the whole Socialist Party. Throughout the discussions, it was the party – not the federation – that was invoked as the organization whose policies the Finnish speakers wanted to affect.[205] Speakers stressed the importance of Finns not only joining the U.S. socialist movement, but also on them making an impact. One delegate noted that since there were large parts of the country in which Americans had not organized socialist locals, such as the mining areas around Hibbing, Finnish socialists should take the initiative in these places in organizing Americans. Another delegate insisted that the party should learn from the Finns and establish its own official newspaper. Eventually, the convention approved an appeal to American socialists that asked them to organize "into a unified party on the basis of European tactics."[206] In a debate on religion, the delegate Olga Heinonen argued that socialists should tone down their Darwinist criticism of religion for strategic reasons, since it alienated work-

204 Paul Lubotina: "Tanner, Pasanen, and Laukki: Emissaries of Labour Reform and Ethnic Integration." In Michael S. Beaulieu, Ronald N. Harpelle & Jaimi Penney (eds.): *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States.* Institute of Migration: Turku 2011, p. 111.

205 See, for example, the discussion on the co-operative movement under the title "Should the Socialist Party support the co-operative movement?" *Pöytäkirja Amerikan Suomalaisten Sosialisti-Osastojen Edustajakokouksesta Hibbingissä, Minn., Elokuun 1–7 päivinä 1906*. Työmiehen kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1907, pp. 79–88.

206 *Pöytäkirja* 1907, p. 95.

ers with religious or spiritual backgrounds. All workers, be they "Mohammedians or Hindus," should be able to join the party if they shared its core tenets.[207]

Yet, while the Marxist Socialists associated close interethnic interaction with progress and modernity, national, linguistic and religious divisions among workers were still considered a fact to be reckoned with. Socialists did not deny the importance of national, religious and linguistic divisions in the contemporary world and sought to calibrate their organizational efforts accordingly. Indeed, Heinonen's contention that socialists should temper their Darwinist rhetoric in order to suit the spiritual concerns of Muslims and Hindus reflected just such an understanding. While socialists may have worked for a world where national divisions carried no political significance, they should still calibrate their organizing for a world divided by several politically and socially salient non-class divisions. The heated debate on the so-called women's question offers an interesting parallel. The "pervasive masculinist ethos" that Topp has identified within early-1900s Italian-American syndicalism was also evident among male Finnish socialists,[208] although the relatively notable participation of women in Finnish socialist activism did quell this bravado.[209] While many women and some men demanded that

207 *Pöytäkirja* 1907, p. 46. After a heated discussion, the convention approved a resolution that positioned religion as a private matter.

208 Topp 2001, p. 51. The FSF's debates on separate women's organizations offers much evidence of this leftist machismo. Martin Hendrickson, for instance, stated the following at the FSF's 1909 convention: "As long as women fit with men in the same bed, they better also fit into other joint activities with men." Syrjälä 1909, p. 201.

209 Riitta Stjärnstedt: "Finnish Women in the North American Labour Movement." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States.* The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, pp. 257–276. Because of the active participation of women in socialist activities, the rhetoric of Finnish socialist men – as misogynistic as it often was – mostly lacked the direct references to sexual prowess and conquest that Topp identifies with the Italian radicals. While women's activism quelled the misogynistic rhetoric to a degree, this did not necessarily affect the men's private behavior.

working women should have the right to separate sex-based organizations in order to deal with specifically sex-based forms of oppression, most men regarded these demands as being contrary to socialism's purported universalism. A delegate at the FSF's 1906 convention contended that "Men and women are both people; so no separation on sex lines." This was effectively the majority position on the issue for a long time among the men that belonged to the FSF.[210]

Thus, the socialist universalism was almost always tempered by some kind of recognition about the political and psychological relevance of non-class divisions, there was no consensus on just how many concessions socialists should make from their belief in universalism. The demands made by some regarding the need to respect the religious sensibilities of Christians, Muslims and Hindus were met by uncompromising anti-clericalism from others.[211] Linguistic divisions, especially, continued to divide workers and needed to be accounted for in agitational and organizational work. The problem was especially profound in a polyglot immigration society, such as the United States. However, the linguistic issue was far from novel for those socialists who had already carried out organizational work in Finland, where the working class of the western and southern coastal areas was divided between Finnish and Swedish speakers. Language was an important category in contemporary Finland for classifying difference, and most Finnish immigrants came from areas with a mixed Finnish-Swedish population.[212] The linguistic issue was also heavily

210 *Pöytäkirja* 1907, p. 61. On the "woman question" debate in the Finnish Socialist Federation, see, for example, Stjärnstedt 1981, pp. 257–276. Ultimately, however, the men who opposed separate women's organizations ultimately lost the debate, and women organized their own associations and founded their own paper, *Toveritar* ("The Woman Comrade"), in 1911.

211 *Pöytäkirja* 1907, pp. 47–51.

212 Some twenty percent of immigrants from Finland to North America were Swedish-speakers, and many of the Finnish-speakers came from the bilingual Ostrobothnia province, or areas close to bilingual and Swedish-speaking areas. On Finland-Swedish migration to the United States,

politicized in early twentieth-century Finland, and the linguistic division was for some, at least, a key interpretative model to utilize when assessing ethnoracial divisions in the United States. The Social Democrats in Finland considered the linguistic issue to be subservient to class struggle, but also understood the strategic importance of language in organizational work. In early twentieth-century Finland, the Social Democrats, together with the bourgeois Swedish People's Party, became the chief defenders of the linguistic rights of Swedish speakers and attracted a significant following among the urban Swedish-speaking working class.[213]

The emphasis of Finnish socialists on linguistic issues in America emerged out of the everyday concerns of the immigrants, but also had its background in their experiences in Finland. As Finnish socialist workers' associations started to organize in the United States in the early 1900s, these linguistic difficulties presented a major hindrance to closer co-operation with the U.S. Socialist Party. Many locals had no members who could communicate in English with local party officials. Two attempts were made to ease these difficulties: first, Finnish socialists set up a translators' office in order to translate English-language documents and communications for Finnish-language socialists. Second, the Finnish socialists asked to join the Socialist Party of America as a separate language federation. It was argued that by bringing Finnish-speaking socialists under the same umbrella organization, it would be easier to agitate and organize among them. To be sure, this was not an issue where all socialist agreed. Alex Halonen, for example, noted in his 1906 pamphlet on the nationality question that Finnish workers in America should make common cause

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see Anders Myhrman: *Finlandsvenskar i Amerika.* Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland: Helsingfors 1972; Mika Roinila: "Finland-Swedes in North America." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 221–242.

213 Taina Uusitalo: *Kieli vai työväenaate? Taistelu ruotsinkielisen työväestön maailmankatsomuksesta 1900–1917.* Turun yliopisto: Turku 2015.

with non-Finnish workers and keep their nationality "a completely private matter." There was no need for a distinct Finnish socialist federation.[214]

Other socialists disagreed, and it was they who ultimately prevailed in the debate: the Finnish Socialist Federation was established in August 1906. It should, however, be stressed that the federation's function was, as its name suggests, to serve *linguistic* needs, rather than national or ethnic concerns. Its establishment was not legitimated with reference to the preservation of Finnish identity, but with a wholly practical rationale. Since most Finns in America could not speak English, they should be brought into the party's fold through Finnish agitation. The language federation was to be merely a temporary solution. As Finnish immigrants and their children learned English, the federation would become obsolete. Indeed, it actively worked towards its own obsolescence by encouraging English-language learning and the acquisition of U.S. citizenship.[215] That the language federation was a Finnish-*language* organization and not a Finnish nationality organization is demonstrated by the fact that Swedish-speaking Finns did not usually associate with it. Instead, they joined the Scandinavian language federation. In practice, of course, the language federation could and did work to affirm national identification, rather than to suppress it, as the ensuing debate surrounding Finns' "hall socialism" proved. This line of criticism was already taken up Leo Laukki at the Finnish Socialist Federation's 1909 conference.[216]

214 Alex Halonen: *Kansallisuuskysymys. Sosialismin suhde muihin kysymyksiin I. Työmiehen Kirjapaino: Hancock, Mich. 1906*, pp. 19–22. On Halonen's thinking on historical materialism and nationality, see also Alex Halonen: *Historian materialistinen käsitys*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiön Kirjapaino: [Hancock]: 1906.

215 F.J. Syrjälä (ed.): *Kolmannen Amerikan Suomalaisen Sosialistijärjestön Edustajakokouksen Pöytäkirja. Kokous pidetty Hancockissa, Mich. 23–30 p. Elok., 1909.* Raivaajan Kirjapaino: Fitchburg [1910], p. 247.

216 F.J. Syrjälä (ed.): *Kolmannen Amerikan Suomalaisen Sosialistijärjestön Edustajakokouksen Pöytäkirja. Kokous pidetty Hancockissa, Mich. 23–30 p. Elok., 1909.* Raivaajan Kirjapaino: Fitchburg [1910], pp. 76–77.

Thus, Marxist socialists did their utmost to connect with the American working class, but they understood that engagement with the wider American labor movement was not only a matter of reaching out; it was also a case of catching up. Finnish workers had to be lifted up to the same level as America's other "civilized" nationalities, and thus "agitational and educational work" was deemed the most important field of work within the Finnish Socialist Federation.[217] Only by enlightening and educating themselves could the Finns reach the level of the more advanced nationalities. Finnish socialists also observed differences among humans from a temporal perspective.

1.4. Catching Up: Marxists and Racial Uplift

European and American socialist thinking was heavily influenced by Darwinism. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were contemporaries of Charles Darwin and drew on his ideas of evolution and development. German Marxists of the late nineteenth century became invested in illustrating socialism's compatibility with Darwinist evolution. Socialist intellectuals, such as Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein, applied evolutionary ideas in their writing and viewed societal development towards socialism as a process of natural evolution towards a more sophisticated and rational society.[218] They challenged the prevalent notion that natural selection and the survival of the fittest contradicted the tenets of altruistic socialism. Evolutionary ideas were also important for socialists in Finland, who were intent on proving the scientific credentials of Marxism. In addition to German Marxists, they drew on the work of Italian criminologist Enrico Ferri, whose book on the relationship between socialism and modern science

217 "Sosialisti- ja työväenliikkeen edistys." In *Köyhälistön Nuija II 1908*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiön Kirjapaino: Hancock 1908, p. 35.

218 Richard Weikart: *Socialist Darwinism: Evolution in German Socialist Thought from Marx to Bernstein*. International Scholars Publications: San Francisco 1998.

was translated to Finnish in 1905.[219] Evolutionary ideas had also wide currency among American socialists in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, who conceived of societal development as an evolutionary process.[220]

Thus, it comes as little surprise that Darwinist evolutionary theory was also an important part of early twentieth-century Finnish-American socialism. Most early Finnish-American socialist leaders and activists had acquainted themselves with socialism already in Finland and were thus familiar with ideas of evolution on their arrival to the United States. American socialism's infatuation with evolutionary ideas only amplified Finnish immigrant socialists' fondness for Darwinism. Itinerant socialist agitators, like A.F. Tanner and Moses Hahl, often lectured on evolutionary theory, which created conflict with the Finnish-American religious establishment. Hahl, especially, became an important figure in the popularization of Darwinist ideas among Finnish socialists. He was born in rural Eastern Finland in 1879 and received little formal education. He became interested in socialism while working in odd jobs in Finland, and immigrated to the United States in 1903. There he continued his activities in the labor movement and became one of the most influential lecturers and writers in the early Finnish-American labor movement. His thinking drew on Nietzsche and Marx, but he was especially interested in Darwinist biology. In 1906, he wrote a primer on evolutionary theory, for example, for Finnish children in America.[221] As with so many other American socialists, for Hahl socialism

219 Hannu Soikkanen: *Sosialismin tulo Suomeen. Ensimmäisiin yksikamarisen eduskunnan vaaleihin asti.* WSOY: Porvoo 1961, pp. 92–93.

220 On evolutionary thinking among American socialists, see Pittenger 1993; Bender 2009.

221 M. Hahl: *Alkuoppia lapsille.* Raivaajan Kirjapaino: Fitchburg, Mass. 1906. See also Arja Pilli: "Moses Hahl – Socialist Agitator and Satirist." In Michael Karni, Olavi Koivukangas & Edward W. Laine (eds.): *Finns in North America: Proceedings of Finn Forum III, 5–8 September 1984, Turku, Finland.* Institute of Migration: Turku 1988, pp. 398–407; Arja Pilli: "Moses Hahl: Finnish-American Disciple of Marx, Darwin and Nietzsche." *American Studies in Scandinavia.* Vol. 17, No. 1, 1985, pp. 11–22.

was an evolutionary force and he—perhaps more than any other Finnish-American socialist—constantly emphasized the connection between socialism and evolution. For Hahl, evolution and progress equaled increased control over base instincts. In 1914, Hahl noted in a book on socialism and racial refinement that "The higher a stage a being develops, the more they can restrict the power of 'blind instinct'."[222]

Throughout the early 1900s, Hahl was among the harshest critics of religions within the Finnish Socialist Federation, as he saw them as a degenerative force on the working class.[223] Ruling classes were invested in keeping the majority of the people on a low civilizational plane and to cultivate misery-inducing instincts among them. It was only when the working class adopted "the principle of self-conscious improvement"[224] that a true future-oriented society could be born. Racial, national and class survival depended on the group's ability to elevate the principle of improvement above individual passions.[225] Hahl believed that the nation that first realized the principles of human improvement would be "the most powerful nation," invoking the Spencerian struggle that pitted fit and unfit nations and races against each other.[226] Artistic expression should also be harnessed in

222 Moses Hahl: *Lihan evankeliumi. Moraalin arvostelua.* Suomalainen sosialistinen kustannusyhtiö: Fitchburg 1914, p. 5.

223 *Pöytäkirja* 1907, pp. 47–51. He explained his thinking more thoroughly in his 1914 book. Human development required struggle and to strive to better oneself, and if these basic instincts were suppressed, as religion did, the progression would inevitably stall. Buddhism and Christianity were the biggest culprits in spreading this false sense of perfection into humans, and "true Buddhists and true Christians" were the most degenerate people in this regard. Islam, Hahl noted without much clarification, was the only great religious tradition whose effect on its practitioners had not been wholly regressive. See Hahl 1914, pp. 29–30.

224 The Finnish word that Hahl uses—*jalostus*—carries decidedly biological connotations that are not captured by the word "improvement." Perhaps a better, if more cumbersome, translation would be "improvement by breeding."

225 Hahl 1914, pp. 16–17.

226 Hahl 1914, p. 106.

order to serve the principle of human improvement – "the idea of attaining a healthy body and a healthy mind" – by generating consciousness of mass degeneration. Only by learning about their own massive degeneration could the people start to work towards their own biological betterment.[227]

Indeed, Hahl's novels and plays often sought to convey political messages, including about the importance of eugenic betterment, to a largely working-class audience. One of his less subtle works in this vein was the play *Tumma täplä. Yliihminen ja aliihminen* ("A Dark Spot. The Übermensch and the Untermensch"), which was published in book form in Canada in 1912. The play portrayed a group of characters – among them the *Untermensch*, a twenty-something prostitute, her son named "Disgusting" (*Iljetys*) and Übermensch, a healthy man – who all visited the practice of a cellular scientist, seeking to obtain his approval for their respective marriages. The strict scientist elaborated at length about why he was only willing to condone marriages and sexual relations between healthy people. Consequently, prostitutes, drunks and people with venereal diseases did not get his scientifically-informed approval. The play was a plea for workers to dismiss the superficial and ultimately deceptive notion of romantic love for the more enlightened one of rational love. In this scenario, men and women married not out of uncontrollable passion, but out of the calculated desire to give birth to healthy children who were free of hereditary diseases and weaknesses.[228] While the play condemned any overtly inhumane treatment of the mentally ill and other "degenerates," it explicitly advocated for their eradication through legislative measures, such as forced sterilization. In the play's second act the Übermensch muses: "[I]f society wants to preserve its vitality, it must take rapid measures to annihilate the degenerate."[229] Ultimately, the play seeks to demonstrate the thin

227 Hahl 1914, p. 93–94. See also Moses Hahl: "Yli-ihminen." In *Köyhälistön Nuija III 1909.* Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1908, pp. 49–63.

228 Moses Hahl: *Tumma täplä. Yliihminen ja aliihminen.* Työkansan Kirjap.-Yht.: Port Arthur 1912.

229 Hahl 1912, p. 70.

veneer that separates supposedly superior and inferior people. In the final act it transpires that the Übermensche has contracted syphilis from the *Untermensch* prostitute and has also transferred the debilitating disease to his new-born child, who is left to die. Having lost his child and wife, the Übermensche commits suicide, with only the grieving prostitute and her mentally degenerate child by his side.[230]

Hahl's ambivalent disposition towards the working class and its evolutionary potential closely mirrored the conceptions of Jack London, another socialist author. As Mark Pettinger has noted, London had "an ambivalent relationship" in his best-selling fiction with the working class, which he regarded through the lens of evolutionary theory. Unlike the more optimistic socialist intellectuals of his time, who trusted in the ability of workers to develop their rational capabilities and intellectual enlightenment, London was much less sure that they possessed such potential. For him, the cultural development of humanity was a superficial phenomenon that was never entirely able to harness the more atavistic passions that smoldered underneath. There was a perennial tension between culture and the primordial beast that existed within every human being. Civilization was fragile and evolutionary gains could always be reversed – a disquieting prospect for optimistic socialists who were never entirely at ease with London's portrayals of the working class.[231] Hahl's visions of an unenlightened, instinct-driven and potentially dangerous working class were not only clearly indebted to Nietzsche and Spencer, but also to London, whose books were widely translated into Finnish in the 1910s and 1920s.[232]

230 Hahl 1912, pp. 91–140.

231 Pittenger 1993, pp. 210–211.

232 Two London translations were printed in the United States. See Jack London: *Kurjalistoa*. (Orig. *People of the Abyss*). Translated by Kaapo Murros. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1911; Jack London: *Rautakorko*. (Orig. *The Iron Heel*) Translated by Elof Kristianson. Suom. Sos. Kustannusyhtiö: Fitchburg 1910. Publishing houses in Finland – both socialist

While Hahl bemoaned the working class' degenerate condition and was often dismissive of its intellectual capabilities,[233] he maintained that refinement was possible: "Every nationality and every race can acquire the required knowledge and customs for civilization in a relatively short time, as the case of the American negroes attests."[234] This optimism for racial uplift was shared by other Finnish socialist agitators, even if they did not necessarily endorse Hahl's enthusiastic subscription to racial eugenics. Finnish workers needed to elevate their civilizational status in order to fully associate with U.S. socialists and to be on par with the white native-born American workers and the more advanced immigrant nationalities, such as the Irish, Germans, Cornish and other Western and Northern Europeans. Socialist agitators were under no illusions as to the scale of this task. By and large they accepted the dismal image of ordinary Finnish immigrant folk depicted by anti-emigration Finns. Just as with the religious establishment and nationalistic press back home, the more educated socialist activists could also depict their working-class compatriots as an uncouth, uncivilized mass. The socialist leaders also shared the temperance movement's concern about the alcoholism of Finnish workingmen. With this in mind, it is small wonder that socialism among Finnish Americans first emerged in temperance lodges.[235]

However, rather than blame this state of savagery and drunkenness on Godlessness and unpatriotic tendencies, the socialists sought to pinpoint the economic reasons for ills like alcoholism, crime, mental illness, prostitution and suicide.[236] They also at-

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and non-socialist – translated many more books from London in the 1910s and 1920s, and they were also sold in Finnish-American bookstores.

233 Pilli 1988, p. 402. See also Pilli 1985.

234 Hahl 1914, p. 99.

235 Karni, Michael: "Finnish Temperance and its Clash with Emerging Socialism in Minnesota." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States.* The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, pp. 163–174.

236 T. Qwining: "Juoppous ja köyhyys." In *Köyhälistön Nuija II 1908.* Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiön Kirjapaino: Hancock 1908, pp. 53–74; "Itse-

tacked religious leaders and the capitalist establishment for intentionally keeping the workers in the dark. One writer lamented in a socialist paper, for example that "America's Finns still wander in intellectual darkness,"[237] whilst Alex Halonen noted in 1907 that "Finns [in America] have been heavily chained slaves of spiritual and secular potentates," which had arrested their intellectual development and made them susceptible to the twin evils of drink and conservatism. Brought up in rural conditions and under wardenship of religious leaders, the Finns in America had not had the chance to "breathe the air of liberty," and all rationality and freedom had therefore seemed sacrilegious to them. Kurikka's Theosophy, which mixed religiousness with a superficial form of socialist rhetoric, was a reflection of the deep-rootedness of this conservative conditioning. Socialists had waged a merciless campaign against ignorance by publishing progressive literature, establishing newspapers and undertaking agitation work among workers. Halonen explained that the chief aim of this socialist proselytizing was to enlighten workers about the power of their self-interest and rational thinking.[238]

Halonen was not the only socialist leader who depicted the socialist agitation among America's Finns as a veritable civilizing mission. Metaphors of missionary work and frontier conquest abounded in Finnish-American socialist rhetoric in the first two

murha yhteiskunnallisena ilmiönä." In *Köyhälistön Nuija II 1908*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiön Kirjapaino: Hancock 1908, pp. 83–85; T[oivo] H[iltunen]: "Köyhyys." In *Köyhälistön Nuija III 1909*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1908, pp. 33–47; T[oivo] H[iltunen]: "Kapitalismin 'siveellisyys' eli Prostitutsioni yhteiskunnallisena ongelmana." In *Köyhälistön Nuija III 1909*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1908, pp. 73–89; Tri. John Jackola: "Taukoamaton taistelu keuhkotaudin ja ihmiskunnan välillä." In *Köyhälistön Nuija V 1911*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1910, pp. 161–192

237 K. D—r.: "Sosialismi työväen hirmuna." *Amerikan Suomalainen Työmies*, 20.8.1903.

238 Halonen 1907, pp. 12-15. See also, for example, "Kansallisen sivistyksemme edustus Amerikassa." *Raivaaja*, 9.1.1909; "Mikä on syynä kansankerrosten alhaiseen sivistyskantaan?" *Raivaaja*, 26.7.1910.

decades of the twentieth century. The leading agitators referred to themselves as "apostles of socialism" and frequently depicted their visits to Midwestern Finnish communities as a plunge into almost impenetrable darkness. They saw themselves as pioneers, who were bringing the light of civilization and enlightenment to the uncouth masses.[239]

The memoirs of Martin Hendrickson, a key itinerant agitator, are an illustrative case in point. Entitled "Memories from my 10-year-long pioneering work," the memoirs, which were written in 1909, depict the herculean challenges faced by the agitator in trying to spread internationalist and scientific socialism among the parochial and superstitious American Finns. In Midwestern religious strongholds, he is constantly heckled for being a "devil incarnate"; he is chased out of Finnish households for practicing "witchcraft" and he has to constantly struggle with the utter stupidity of his uncivilized compatriots. Hendrickson recounts that "ignorance was great among Finns during that time. "Drunkenness and savagery were the highest ideals."[240] Hendrickson was not shy in letting his compatriots hear his low opinion of their civilizational status. When Hendrickson was invited to speak at the inauguration of a Finnish socialist hall in Utah in 1911, for example, a participant later recalled that he "called Finns mountain trolls and other kinds of names, as is usual of him."[241] It was clear that much work had to be done before the wilderness would be ripe for spreading the seed of science, enlightenment and socialism. It is telling that when Finnish socialist leaders in Mas-

239 On accounts of this "pioneering work," see, for example, Tahvo Tohmolainen: "Ensimäinen ristiretki Työmiehen hyväksi." In *Työmies kymmenvuotias 1903–1913 juhlajulkaisu.* Työmies Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1913, pp.156–158; N.J.A.: "Se oli siihen aikaan." In *Työmies kymmenvuotias 1903–1913 juhlajulkaisu.* Työmies Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1913, pp. 35–36; "Lyhyt silmäys Wyomingin suomalaisten pyrintöihin." In *Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917.* Toveri Press: Astoria, Ore. 1917, pp. 67–76.

240 Martin Hendrickson: *Muistelmia kymmenvuotisesta raivaustyöstäni.* Raivaajan kirjapaino: Fitchburg 1909.

241 "Utahin osastoista." In *Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917.* Toveri Press: Astoria 1917, p. 107.

sachusetts decided to establish a new newspaper for East Coast Finns in 1904, they named it "The Pioneer" (*Raivaaja*). Some had suggested the name "The Socialist," but this title was deemed to be premature: "We have some pioneering work to do before we can call ourselves socialists. Let us, therefore, name the newcomer the 'Pioneer.'"[242]

It is indeed striking how closely the early socialist rhetoric on uncouth Finnish immigrants at times resembled the lamentations of bourgeois nationalists and religious leaders about immoral immigrants. This resemblance seems less incongruous if one considers the class background of early Finnish-American socialist leaders. While most turn-of-the-century Finnish immigrants were unskilled, uneducated and hailed from Finland's rural western and northwestern regions, the socialist leaders were more often professionals or craftsmen, university educated and originated from the more urban southern parts of Finland. Many of them had been forced to leave Finland as political refugees and most had at least some prior experience in labor organizing or labor journalism.[243] They usually differed from their rank and file in professional terms, with Halonen, for example, being a priest,

242 Antti Lempinen: "Raivaajaa perustamassa." In *Raivaaja kymmenen vuotta.* [Fitchburg] [1915], p. 18. See also John I. Kolehmainen: *Sow the Golden Seed. A History of the Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Finnish-American Newspaper* Raivaaja *(The Pioneer) 1905–1955.* The Raivaaja Publishing Company: 1955, p. 30; Leo Mattson (ed.): *Neljäkymmentä vuotta: kuvauksia ja muistelmia Amerikan suomalaisen työväenliikkeen toimintataipaleelta 1906–1946.* Finnish American Mutual Aid Society: Superior 1946, p. 35.

243 Karni has calculated that almost a fifth of the leadership were business managers, another fifth were tradesmen and another 20% worked in journalism. Professionals, such as doctors and accountants (13%), as well as intellectuals, like authors and playwrights (11%), were also much better represented among leaders than the rank and file. Only a tenth of the leaders were industrial workers and less than a tenth worked in agriculture. While Kaunonen (2010, pp. 3–5) is right to suggest that the social cleavage between socialist leaders and the rank and file should not be overtly stressed, this suggestion applies better at later stages of Finnish-American socialist activism. In the early 1900s, it is clear that most socialist leaders were much better educated and more urban than the average Finnish immigrant. Karni 1975, p. 100. See also Kivisto 1984, p. 93.

Tanner a doctor and Syrjälä, Hendrickson and Salin being shoemakers or tailors. Many had at least some university education behind them, usually from the University of Helsinki, which had trained the professional and religious elite of Finland.[244] Thus, while politically at odds, the early Finnish-American socialists shared a professional and educational background, and its attendant socialization, with their conservative adversaries. It is therefore hardly surprising that the socialist leaders often regarded their working-class compatriots with the same gaze of otherness as their bourgeois colleagues and fellow alumni. This dynamic was in many ways comparable to the detestation of Italian-American radicals towards purportedly backward southern Italians.[245]

The socialist leaders' image of uncivilized Finnish immigrants also drew on contemporary American discussions on immigration. These turn-of-the-century discussions were awash with doubts about immigrants' abilities to assimilate culturally, politically and racially.[246] Finnish-American socialist leaders conceded that their Finnish immigrant constituency was backward, but they challenged the pessimistic nativist rhetoric that drew on racial science. For the socialists, Finnish backwardness was not explicable by inherent traits or racial characteristics, but was a result of cultural conditioning that was underpinned by production relations in society. The socialist lecturers who traveled the country drew on optimistic strains in evolutionary theory and mounted an ideological challenge to the idea that human consciousness was the product of inherent traits or racial characters. In a book based on his popular lectures, Halonen noted: "It is time to abandon the hopeless and stupid conception that a human being's wisdom or stupidity is certainly determined at birth." Human brains were not custom-designed by some higher power in order to punish or reward particular human beings, but were, rather, formed by societal conditions. Thus, servility was not a

244 Kurikka, Tanner and Murros, for example, had all studied at the University of Helsinki.

245 Topp 2001, pp. 72–74.

246 Higham 1968; Bender 2009.

God-imposed, inherent condition, but a product of a society that kept its subjects weak and ignorant in order to exploit them. In a similar way, a rational, circumspect mind was not something people were born with, but was something that followed from elevated self-awareness and enlightenment.[247] These assertions challenged both the racism of U. S. nativists and the isolationism of Kurikka-ite utopian socialists. The Finnish mindset was not destined to be incompatible with modern industrial civilization; it was possible to catch up.

To achieve this elevated status, Finnish socialists established an impressive network of educational and enlightenment institutions throughout the country. All socialist associations had an educational committee that organized teaching of the English language, socialist theory, evolution theory, civic studies and other subjects. The culture of socialist associations was penetrated by a disciplined striving for learning. Frans J. Syrjälä described a culture in which "It is an unwritten rule of comradely discipline that a dumb and ignorant person is laughed down […] One must read and study to achieve a position alongside one's comrades and friends, and in order to serve the greater cause that the working class must achieve to save their class and the whole of humanity."[248] Drama clubs, which emerged as an important part of Finnish socialist associational culture, also had a significant educational goal. While all plays did not have an overt political message, the workers' theaters frequently put on performances that sought to enlighten as well as entertain.[249] In 1907, socialists gained full control of a Minnesota-based people's college that had

247 Halonen 1907, pp. 18–19.

248 Frans Syrjälä: "Pimeydestä suuria valoja kohden" in *Kalenteri Amerikan suomalaiselle työväestölle 1918*. Suomal. Sosial. Kust. Yhtiö: Fitchburg 1917, pp. 106–107.

249 Timo Riippa: "The Finnish Immigrant Theatre in the United States." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States*. The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, pp. 283–284; Keijo Virtanen: "Finnish Identity in Immigrant Culture." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration*. Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 180–188.

been established by Finnish-American Lutherans. They transformed the college into a socialist educational institution, which they named Work People's College. The school became the center of Finnish-American socialists' educational work and it trained countless journalists, clerks and other functionaries to serve in the labor movement. In addition to socialist theory and politics, the college held courses in U.S. history, economics, English language and evolution theory.[250]

Education and enlightenment emerged as key values in the incipient Finnish-American labor movement, with the autodidact worker representing the highest ideal of these educational efforts. In 1917, when looking back on these "dark times of 'knife-fighting'" (*pimeä 'puukkojunkkarikausi'*), the socialist journalist Frans Syrjälä noted that the socialists had accomplished a veritable racial uplift. In the past Finns had been associated with Indians and Gypsies, in terms of their drinking and brawling habits, as well as constituting the largest immigrant group in the Midwest's mental asylums. Moreover, they had generally been treated as "the darkest nationality" or as "savages of an inferior race." However, these negatives had now been overturned and they were "respected by all progressive people."[251]

In the early years of organizing, however, this was still only a distant prospect, not a reality. In asserting the ability of Finnish workers to evolve, the socialist activists faced tough resistance. On the one hand, they were confronted by their bourgeois and religious compatriots, who did not deny Finns' potential to evolve, but dismissed the socialists' concept of evolution. Rather than a force for progress, they presented socialism as an atavistic movement that threatened to keep Finns mired in their depressed state

250 Douglas Ollila, Jr.: "The Work Peoples College: Immigrant Education for Adjustment and Solidarity." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, pp. 87–118; Auvo Kostiainen: "Work Peoples College: An Immigrant Institution." *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 5, No. 1–4, 1980, pp. 295–309.

251 Syrjälä 1917, pp. 103–104.

and to negatively interfere with their process of Americanization. On the other hand, socialists had to confront a far more dominant narrative that questioned whether Eastern European immigrants were able to shrug off their backward culture. The rise of racialized nativism after 1905 located the source of immigrant backwardness in biological nature and deep-rooted cultural essences, not in malleable cultural traits or in remediable socioeconomic factors.[252] For many native-born Americans in the Midwest, the manner in which Finnish immigrants flocked to the red flag seemed like a stark confirmation of these doubts: not able to deal with the expectations of industrial America, these backward newcomers consoled themselves in frustrated rabblerousing.[253] The tensions between these competing narratives of race, progress and civilization came to a head in northern Minnesota in the summer of 1907, when a major strike brought the iron mining industry of the Mesabi Range to a standstill.

1.5. Industrial Action as Civilization: The Mesabi Strike of 1907

The Iron Range in Minnesota's northwestern corner was a polyglot and multinational mining region in the early years of the twentieth century. It emerged in the late nineteenth century as one of America's major iron ore mining areas, with the majority of miners being Irish and Cornish immigrants. Thousands of Finns, Italians and Slavic immigrants had arrived in the region by the turn of the twentieth century. The majority of these new arrivals had to settle for unskilled and low-paid jobs in the mines, which were also extremely dangerous. Between 1905 and 1907 alone, some 300 miners, mostly newly-arrived immigrants, died in mining accidents. Additional humiliations, like the system of petty graft whereby miners paid their supervisors for emplo-

252 Higham 1968, pp. 158–165.

253 Ronning 2003, pp. 359-360.

yment, added insult to injury. When the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) began to organize in the area in 1906, its officials found fertile soil for its message of better wages, safer working conditions and a more humane existence for its members. By the summer of 1907, the federation already had some 2,500 miners on its rolls and its organizers started to prepare for a major showdown with the Oliver Mining Company. These plans were scrapped, however, when Cloquet's lumberjacks and Duluth's dockworkers initiated a wildcat strike, which soon spread to the mines of the Mesabi Range. The WFM was quick to react, however, and presented the Oliver Mining Company with a series of demands. When the company refused to negotiate, the union declared a strike for July, 20, 1907. The bitter strike, which was marred by violence and widespread use of strikebreakers, lasted for two months and ended in the union's defeat. However, the company enjoyed something of a pyrrhic victory, as it suffered major financial losses.[254]

In Finnish-American historiography, the strike is deemed to have been a major baptism of fire for the newly-founded Finnish Socialist Federation and the first show of strength of organized Finnish miners. Finns had previously been used as strikebreakers.[255] Indeed, in 1907 Finns made up the majority of the 10,000 strikers. They were often singled out by the local pro-company press as the strike instigators. A Finnish member of the Minnesota legislature bemoaned the biased strike coverage: "It appears to be the policy of the Duluth newspapers to generally represent the Finnish people in the most detestable light."[256] After the strike, the Oliver Mining Company blacklisted many of the Finnish labor

254 Neil Betten: "Strike on the Mesabi: 1907." *Minnesota History*, Vol. 40, No. 7, 1967, pp. 340–347; Michael G. Karni: "The Founding of the Finnish Socialist Federation and the Minnesota Strike of 1907." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, pp. 74–75; Ollila 1975, pp. 32–34; Lubotina 2011, pp. 117–119.

255 Kivisto 1984, p. 85.

256 John Saari: "Correspondence." *Duluth News-Tribune*, 28.7.1907. On the press's anti-Finnish coverage, see Karni 1977, pp. 76–77.

force. Some 1,200 Finns were fired. Finns had composed almost a fifth of all Oliver's workers before the strike, whereas less than a tenth of the workers were of Finnish origin afterwards.[257] The 1907 strike is often described as a largely Finnish strike for these reasons. Michael Karni, for example, has noted that "the Finns had been so bold as to strike largely by themselves. None of the other ethnic groups in the Iron Range had felt inclined to join the struggle."[258]

Still, it is important to remember that the strike was not entirely "Finnish" in its composition, as it was organized in a decidedly multinational fashion. The WFM's chief organizer in Northern Minnesota was the Italian socialist Teofilo Petriella, who was denigrated in a local newspaper as that "alien Dago anarchist."[259] He promoted other immigrants to union leadership and divided each local department into three national sections – Italian, Slavic and Finnish – and recruited the leaders of these sections from the corresponding nationalities. When the strike began, miners from many nationalities participated, and the names of the strike leaders reflect the movement's multinational character: Mäki, McNair, Di Stefano, Heiskanen, Kovish, Lucas, Masianovich, Lundstrom, McHale, Manarini, Tromfors and so on.[260] As the company started to bring in strikebreakers from eastern port cities, leaflets asking workers to stay away from the Iron Range were printed in several European languages. The names of "scabs" were published in the Slovenian *Glas Svobode* and in the Finnish *Työmies* newspapers.[261] When John Mäki, McNair and Petriella conferred with Minnesota's Governor about the strike, they stressed the labor movement's international ethos. Mäki explained to the Governor that strikers carried the red flag because this represented

257 Karni 1975, pp. 146–147.

258 Karni 1975, p. 388.

259 Betten 1967. Petriella had been present at the Finnish Socialist Federation's 1906 convention in Hibbing. See *Pöytäkirja* 1907, p. 28.

260 Betten 1967. Lubotina 2011, p. 118.

261 Betten 1967, pp. 341–347.

the color of blood that ran in the body of all men, regardless of their skin color.[262]

The Finnish radicals also endorsed the internationalist rhetoric surrounding the strike and challenged the racialized reading that blamed Finns alone for the failure to advance the socialist cause. The coverage offered by *Työmies* constantly emphasized the multinational character of the picket lines: "Working men of different nationalities shake hands in fraternity, just like the capitalists have already done." The company's attempt to lay the blame on Finns alone was a desperate attempt to hide the formation of a united international working-class movement.[263] *Työmies*'s correspondent in Eveleth, reported that "Nationalities do not fight each other. They feel themselves as workers."[264] Finnish socialists in the area started to organize so-called international celebrations, which mixed Finnish and English language speeches, poems and songs that encouraged workers of different nationalities "to get to know each other."[265]

During the strike, Minnesota's Finnish businessmen, religious leaders and other prominent citizens decried the rabblerousing of their socialist compatriots and made appeals to Finnish national pride in conservative newspapers in order to try and bring about an end to the strike and therefore save the Finns' reputation.[266] The socialists ridiculed their religious and conservative compatriots as a backward element that was unable to shrug off its superstitions and child-like reverence for authority. They dismissed

262 Charles B. Cheney: "A Labor Crisis and a Governor." *The Outlook*, 2.5.1908, p. 27. See above, pp. 6–7.

263 "Luokkataistelu Pohjois-Minnesotassa." *Työmies*, 23.7.1907.

264 "Minnesotan rauta-alueen lakko." *Työmies*, 30.7.1907. See also John Kulu: "Amerikan Kaiku kiikaroi." *Työmies*, 17.8.1907; During the strike, *Työmies* published articles on the detrimental role of "fraternal hatred" and patriotism on the working-class movement. See "Veljesviha työväestössä." *Työmies*, 30.7.1907; "Sosialidemokratia ja isänmaanrakkaus." *Työmies*, 6.8.1907.

265 "Kansainvälinen kenttäjuhla Superiorissa, Wis." *Työmies*, 8.8.1907.

266 Karni 1977, pp. 80–82.

the conservatives' efforts to smash the ranks of the miners as a desperate bourgeois attempt to hold back the natural progress of economic conflict: national sentiments were giving way to class sentiments.[267] One writer hoped that even if all other goals of the strike went unattained, it would be viewed as a success if it was able to strengthen the unity of the workers from different nationalities.[268]

The multinational composition of the movement and the internationalist rhetoric that permeated the picket lines undoubtedly had a powerful effect on the Finnish miners. Solidarity between the nationalities outside the mineshafts stood in stark contrast to the air of national competition and bickering that the company encouraged in its mines. Still, the internationalism was complemented by some counter-currents in the rhetoric used by the union and Finnish socialists. While the WFM emphasized the primary importance of class lines over national divisions, it understood the strategic importance of working within the existing national and linguistic divisions. In 1906, it had first sent native-born American organizers to the Iron Range, who soon realized, however, that "they could speak neither for the workers nor to them." After this, Petriella was sent to be the chief organizer, and the Iron Range locals were organized along national lines.[269]

Indeed, the Finnish strike organizers used Finnishness as a strategic resource, especially when addressing non-converts to socialism. When John Kolu, a key strike leader and a socialist, toured Northern Michigan's Finnish settlements in order to gather support for the strikers, he formulated his appeal in decidedly national terms. In an appeal entitled "For Comrades and Fellow-Nationals," for example, he hoped that Finns across America would lend a helping hand to Minnesota's miners, who were struggling against the mining company with "Finnish per-

267 D.P.: "Isänmaallisuusko meille hyve?" *Työmies*, 22.8.1907; John Kolu: "Amerikan Kaiku kiikaroi." *Työmies*, 17.8.1907.

268 D.P.: "Isänmaallisuusko meille hyve?" *Työmies*, 22.8.1907.

269 Betten 1967, p. 340.

sistence." He held that Finns should show the American people that they were a law-abiding people, but who were also not afraid to defend their human rights. The question was not ideological. Kolu remarked that strikers were only designated as being "North Minnesota's Finns on strike." This stood in stark contrast to the cross-class, internationalist rhetoric that otherwise permeated the strikers' rhetoric.[270] Nationality continued to be a strategic resource for union organizers and socialists.

What most strained the internationalist ethos, however, was the mining company's skill at playing national groups against each other. Soon after the strike was declared, the Oliver Mining Company started to import strikebreakers from eastern port cities. These workers were from different nationalities, with most being new immigrants from Southern Europe – Montenegrins, Croatians, Italians, Slovenians and Greeks. At first, the strikers had some success in warding off the company's efforts to dampen internationalist class solidarity: some new South European immigrants refused to work when they heard of the strike.[271] In the strike's early weeks, *Työmies* correspondents denied that scabbing was associated with any one nationality. A correspondent in Chisholm, for example, remarked that there were "dim fellows" (*pimeitä veikkoja*) among both Catholics and Finns.[272]

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270 John Kolu: "Toverit ja kansalaiset." *Työmies*, 15.8.1907.

271 Betten 1967, p. 347; "Kaivosmiesten lakko Minnesotassa edistyy hiljalleen." *Työmies*, 20.8.1907. See also "Minnesotan rauta-alueen lakko." *Työmies*, 29.8.1907.

272 "Kaivosmiesten lakko Minnesotassa edistyy hiljalleen." *Työmies*, 20.8.1907. See also "Minnesotan lakko." *Työmies*, 15.8.1907. *Työmies* published the names, and sometimes even the exact physical characteristics, of Finnish scabs. See, for example., "Coloradon hirmutapaukset uudistuvat Minnesotassa." *Työmies*, 10.8.1907; "Minnesotan lakko." *Työmies*, 13.8.1907; "Lakko Minnesotan rauta-alueella." *Työmies*, 17.8.1907; "Kaivosmiesten lakko Minnesotassa edistyy hiljalleen." *Työmies*, 20.8.1907. Virginia's Finnish socialists even sent the scab list to the scabs' home town in Finland. The Finnish town's labor association sent a condemnation of the strikebreakers, which was to be published in *Työmies*. See "Paheksumislause lakkopettureille, Lapualta, Suomesta!" *Työmies*, 9.11.1907.

As the strike progressed, however, the newspaper's correspondents increasingly started to refer to the scabs in national terms. In Ely, they were the Austrians; in Biwabik, the Italians.[273] Indeed, the Biwabik correspondent bemoaned that "Italians are the lousiest of them all, you cannot get through to them."[274] In Mountain Iron, Nashwauk and Hibbing, the company fired hundreds of workers in an attempt to change "Finns and Italians into Montenegrins and other nationalities that are still blind."[275] The labor newspaper still reserved most of its ire for the company and the conservative *Amerikan Kaiku* newspaper, but it was clear that the company had succeeded in damaging the internationalist ethos of the strike. When the strike ended, the remaining strikers were almost exclusively Finns.[276] In late September, correspondent in Virginia lamented that "Other nationalities are no longer enthusiastic."[277]

The impact of the bitter strike on the views of Finnish socialists toward the other European immigrants on the Iron Range was ambiguous. The company's use of South European strikebreakers to defeat the industrial action of Finnish and the more "enlightened" South and East Europeans left deep scars on the internationalist spirit that had dazed the miners in the strike's early weeks. The scars were deepened by the company's actions after the strike as hundreds of Finns were blacklisted. Reflecting this bitterness, Finnish miners increasingly referred to the Iron Range's South European immigrants as "blacks," a term that had both political and racial dimensions. It denoted the South Europeans' purported un-enlightenment and ignorance. In socialist rhetoric, anti-socialist Finns could also be described as blacks.

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273 "Lakkotaistelu Minnesotassa." *Työmies*, 27.8.1907. "Austrians" was a term used of the South Slavic nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

274 "Minnesotan rauta-alueen lakko." *Työmies*, 29.8.1907. See also "Italialaisia lakkopettureita." *Työmies*, 17.9.1907.

275 "Minnesotan lakko." *Työmies*, 2.11.1907.

276 Betten 1967, p. 347.

277 "Minnesotan lakkotaistelu." *Työmies*, 28.9.1907.

When directed at South Europeans, however, the term also had a decidedly racial component, referring to the darker complexion of the Italians and South Slavs. The term's use as a racial slur is evident, for example, in a Finnish miner's recollections of ethnic banter in the Iron Range mines: "Because of some earlier grip the Montenegrin would say to the Finn: -'Luk sipmungk' [Look chipmunk] and the Finn would answer: -'Luk bläk sanomapits' [Look black son of a bitch]. That was followed by a roar of laughter from all."[278] The Finnish miners' detestation of the "blacks" was not always only a question of good-hearted banter. This was so in 1916, when the Mesabi Range was again in the throes of a miners' strike. This time the strike was led by South Slavs and Italians, with Finns remaining on the sidelines. An IWW Finn reported that a common refrain among many Finnish miners was "Let the blacks handle themselves like we had to do in 1907."[279] Many Finns continued for a long time to interpret the 1907 strike through a racial lens. When a Finnish miner in the late 1930s was asked about the strike by WPA interviewers, he foregrounded the South European strikebreakers in his reminiscences: "His only comment on the results of the strike was that the Montenegrin population of the Iron Range increased considerably."[280]

While the Mesabi Range labor politics were important in forming Finnish views of the Slavic immigrants, their often disparaging views of the Slavs had also background in the Finnish context. After 1899, the Russian Empire had strengthened its grip on Finland and sought to integrate the Grand Duchy more firmly to the realm. In Finland, these efforts were widely interpreted as oppressive, and broad sections of the society, including the incipient labor movement, mobilized to defend Finland's political

278 Matti Pelto: "Memoirs from a Minnesota Iron Ore Mine." In Pelto, Matti, Papers, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

279 "'Kaikkien maiden työläiset liittykää yhteen!'" *Sosialisti*, 20.6.1916.

280 Interview with Onni Kaivos by Walter Kykyri. 31 October 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

autonomy within the empire. The political situation became especially tense during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–05 and its immediate aftermath. In the fall of 1905, the revolutionary fervor in Russia spread to Finland and culminated in the Great Strike, which demanded an end to Russian oppression and democratic political reform.[281] This political turmoil in the early 1900s had a decided effect on Finnish ideas on Russians. Historians of Finnish anti-Russian thinking have emphasized that this early 1900s denigration of Russia was not racial, but was directed mostly against the Russian administration.[282]

Still, the anti-Russian rhetoric of Finnish nationalists and socialists was underpinned by a civilizational discourse on Russian difference. In political speeches and writing, Russian influence in Finland was frequently cast in civilizational terms: Finland was depicted as a modern and civilized polity, while Russian administrative practices were associated with Oriental barbarism and general backwardness. Socialist agitators, for example, criticized that Russian administrative practices originated from "the darkest corners of Asia."[283] These purported deficiencies of Russians could also be depicted as "Slavic" racial or cultural traits. Thus, many Finns had come to associate Slavic race or culture with low level of civilization and backwardness already in Finland. When they encountered Slavic immigrants on the Mesabi Range, and in other places in the United States, many of them were already susceptible to believe that Slavs were less developed than Northern and Western Europeans. For some, even the use of Slavic strikebreakers may have been familiar from Finland. Some employers

281 Antti Kujala: *Vastakkainasettelun yhteiskunnan synty. Syksyn 1905 suurlakko Helsingissä ja muualla Suomessa.* Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura: Helsinki 2016. http://www.thpts.fi/julkaisut/muut-julkaisut/vastakkainasettelun-yhteiskunnan-synty/.

282 Antti Kujala: *Venäjän hallitus ja Suomen työväenliike 1899*–1905. SHS: Helsinki 1996, pp. 191–194; Outi Karemaa: *Vihollisia, vainoojia, syöpäläisiä. Venäläisviha Suomessa 1917–1923.* SHS: Helsinki 1998, pp. 20–21. This more political anti-Russianness is in contrast to the anti-Russianness of the interwar era, which acquired a decidedly more racial character.

283 Karemaa 1998, p. 20.

at least in Helsinki and Vyborg used Russian strikebreakers to break the strikes of Finnish workers in the late 1800s.[284]

But these anti-Slavic ideas or the company's attempt to play one nationality off against another were not able to entirely sap the internationalist spirit of the miners. For one, the line between strikers and strikebreakers was never entirely congruent with national lines. There were Finnish strikebreakers, and some of the most vocal anti-socialists in the area were Finnish conservatives. At the same time, Italian and South Slavic miners had also gone on strike and had provided much of the strike's most capable leadership. The Finnish Socialist Federation in the area also continued its active efforts to reach out to other nationalities, especially the South Slavs. Finnish socialists assisted in the distribution of a Slovenian labor newspaper in the area and helped to establish Slavic socialist local federations on the Mesabi Range. Finnish and Slavic socialist immigrants also "used the same Finnish socialist halls for their meetings, conducted May Day celebrations together and cooperated in electoral campaigns in many range towns."[285] Indeed, electoral campaigns became a major force for interethnic cooperation between American, Scandinavian, Finnish, Slavic and other immigrant socialists. As Paul Lubotina has noted of the Hibbing Socialist Party, it was a decidedly multinational organization between 1907 and 1914, pooling resources from the town's native-born and immigrant communities in its efforts to gain electoral office. Interethnic cooperation also continued in the IWW, which started to strengthen after 1914.[286]

For the Finnish socialists, the Mesabi Range strike, despite its ultimate defeat and the suffering it had caused for the blacklisted Finns and their families, was still a success in many ways. It was the first major industrial action in which Finnish workers had been at the forefront. Many Finnish miners remained steadfast in their commitment to the strike even as the WFM abandoned

284 Hannu Soikkanen: *Sosialismin tulo Suomeen.* WSOY: Helsinki 1961, p. 55.

285 Gedicks 1979, p. 156.

286 Lubotina 2011, pp. 119–121.

the cause as hopeless and pulled its organizers from the range in September 1907.[287] During the spring of 1908, when Minnesota's Finnish businessmen, religious leaders and conservative newspaper mounted a large-scale campaign to salvage the purportedly stained Finnish reputation,[288] the Finnish socialists responded by turning the conservative logic on its head. Far from staining the Finnish reputation in the eyes of Americans, they held, that the striking Finnish miners and socialists had helped to improve it. While it was true that bourgeois Americans might lose their disingenuous appreciation for docile Finnish workers, the active participation of Finns in the Mesabi Range strike and the related socialist activities had proven to the American working class that they were ready to defend their economic and social rights in a manly and civilized manner.[289]

This not only set the Finns apart from their own disreputable past as a "scab race," but also from those immigrant groups that had yet to shrug off their supposed effeminate backwardness. One socialist writer contended that "A fact is that the American working population is well organized […] and they naturally frown upon those foreign workers who are unable to organize. This is what explains the hostility towards the Japanese, the Chinese and all other nationalities and races that are unable to organize." Now that Finns had proven themselves capable of organizing, they could safely distance themselves from these much-maligned backward races.[290]

The Mesabi Range strike brought to the fore some key tensions in the melting pot ideology of Finnish socialists. On the one hand, the strike had proven in practice what the socialists had already expounded in theory: that common class interests could

287 Lubotina 2011, p. 119.

288 On conservative Finnish-American reactions to the strike, see Hoglund 1977, pp. 47–49; Karni 1977, pp. 80–82.

289 "Suomalaisten arvo kohoaa." *Työmies*, 7.1.1908; "Kansallisuusasiasta." *Työmies*, 12.3.1908; "Suora sana vastustajillemme." *Työmies*, 7.4.1908; William Risto: "Sosialismi ja kansallisuuskysymys." *Työmies*, 6.6.1908.

290 "Ettekö todellakaan häpeä?" *Työmies*, 3.2.1908.

transcend linguistic, national and religious differences and unite diverse workers together in common cause. The polyglot and multi-confessional picket lines, united by a common red blood symbolized in their red flags, could easily be imagined as the first step towards the melting pot of a socialist society. The enthusiastic internationalism of *Työmies* correspondents during the first weeks of the strike is a testament to this. Yet, the company's easy use of "the nationality question" against this multinational unity markedly dampened this enthusiasm. It encouraged Finnish socialists to further qualify their internationalism with evolutionism: it seemed evident that some nationalities or races were less capable of organizing than others. How this interplay between internationalism and evolutionary thought played out was often a matter of local context. One Finnish radical, for example, remembers that in Monessen, Pennsylvania, Finns worked with Croatians, but shunned Poles. He noted that "The Croatians and Finns got along well," since "the Croatians were a very progressive people. They were more educated than the other people. When you compare them to the Polish people, they were way ahead. The Polish were a funny people, they flip-flop. You can't trust them, you see. They had too individualistic ideas. They were goddamned money hungry."[291] Indeed, as the cross-national co-operation between European nationalities increased in the early 1900s, a ranking system emerged between nationalities, whereby radicals deemed some nationalities as having advanced further in civilizational terms than others.

In the case of European immigrants, however, few Finnish socialists would maintain that this was a permanent condition. Montenegrins and other "blind" European nationalities would certainly open their eyes once exposed to industrial capitalism. Moreover, Finnish socialists continued to co-operate with socialists and unionists from other nations. Indeed, when the next large miners' strike in the Midwest broke out in Michigan's Copper

291 Interview with Fred Lilja by Paul Buhle. 28 June 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

Country in the summer of 1913, it was again marked by a distinct internationalist ethos, which combined Finns, Italians, Slavs and other immigrant groups. Gary Kaunonen and Aaron Goings have noted that there was a distinct sense of class consciousness among Copper Country miners that bridged ethnic divisions by the early 1910s.[292] The representatives of the strikers again framed the national divisions as being secondary in importance to working-class solidarity. Labor newspapers also made much of the primary importance of working-class unity, which they believed trumped any nationalistic sentiments that might have divided the workers in the past. The sense of solidarity that was encouraged by this rhetoric was reflected in the so-called Italian Hall Tragedy in December, 1913. This tragic incident occurred at a Christmas party for strikers' children, which had been organized at Calumet's pro-labor Italian Hall. The party was interrupted by a man falsely shouting that a fire had broken out. The strikers later suspected this individual was a company henchman. In the ensuing panic, 83 people were trampled to death, most of them children. The dead represented a cross-section of the Copper Country's European nationalities: some 50 were Finns, which illustrates in a macabre way how the strike brought together workers and workers' families of different nationalities.[293] When the strike was defeated in early 1914, the nationalities of the blacklisted miners also reflected the cross-national nature of the strike. An Ironwood Finn recalled that they were "Finnish, Italian, Slovenian."[294] Finnish radicals later commemorated the strike, for example, by referring to the "international army" of Croatian, Slovenian,

292 Kaunonen & Goings 2013. See also Kaunonen 2010.

293 Kaunonen 2010, xv–xx; Kaunonen & Goings 2013; Larry Lankton*: Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. Oxford University Press: New York 1991. 1991, pp. 236–238.

294 Interview with Frank Wallin by Paul Buhle. 31 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University. Wallin notes that in Ironwood, Italians and "old IWW" Finns continued to co-operate and were the most radical activists in the community.

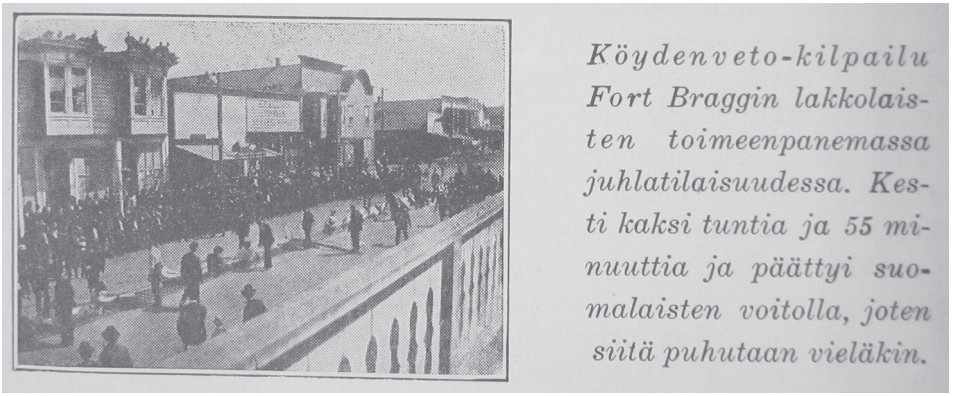

Image 1: This image depicts a tug-of-war competition during a lumber mill strike in Fort Bragg, California, in 1903. Strikers were Finns, Italians and other immigrants. The caption reads: "A tug-of-war competition in an event organized by Fort Bragg's strikers. It lasted for 2 hours and 55 minutes and ended in Finnish victory, which is why it is still talked about." The celebration of a multinational strike with a competition between national tug-of-war teams illustrates how unions could strategically exploit and reinforce both class-based solidarity and national pride. Source: Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917. Toveri Press: Astoria 1917, p. 63.

Finnish and Italian miners who protected the *Työmies* printing house from sabotage.[295]

In the 1910s in the Midwest (and in many other parts of the country), a distinctly cross-national sense of working-class consciousness was emerging among European immigrants. Yet, there were also currents within the union and socialist movements themselves that undercut this melting-pot imagery. First, the strategic use of national and linguistic differences by the unions and socialists could potentially encourage, rather than downplay, national identification (*Image 1*). Second, the melting-pot ethos that supposedly underpinned the immigrants' organizational activities was often coupled with suspicions regarding those

295 K.A. Suvanto: "Toimittajat aseissa." In *Lehtipaja: Työmiehen neljännesvuosisatajulkaisu.* Työmies Society: Superior 1928, pp. 59–63.

nationalities or races that were deemed to be lower on the developmental plane. When looking back on the struggles of the miners at the time, a Wyoming Finn complained in 1917 that "If only all nationalities in Wyoming would be as advanced as Finns in understanding the goal of class struggle, maybe we could achieve something more worthwhile."[296] The question of whether non-European workers could be included in this understanding of solidarity was especially tricky. In Minnesota and Michigan, non-European miners had been few in number and the question was therefore not very pertinent.[297] But in the broader U.S. socialist movement the debate about non-European, and specifically Asian, immigrant workers was intensifying at this time. Finnish socialists had to take a position in this debate, vis-à-vis the capability of Asian workers to organize and assimilate. This brought to the fore the tensions in their thinking between internationalism and evolutionism.

296 "Lyhyt silmäys Wyomingin suomalaisten pyrintöihin." In *Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917.* Toveri Press: Astoria 1917, p. 72.

297 See, however, David Vassar Taylor: *African Americans in Minnesota*. Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2002; Sherri Gebert Fuller: *Chinese in Minnesota.* Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2004; Valerie Bradley-Holliday: *Northern Roots: African Descended Pioneers in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.* Xlibris Corporation: 2009.

2. Developing Others: Socialists and the Immigration Debate

In a 1905 book on the role of Finnish-American workers in the country's socialist struggle, the *Työmies* journalist A.F. Lappi made a magniloquent appeal to internationalism. As capitalism forced parochial nationalities into ever more intimate interaction with each other, the boundaries between nationalities were melting away. Lappi declared that "The national boundaries are broken and international co-operation guarantees individual happiness […] [T]here is no middle ground." The writer, however, seemed to qualify his seemingly uncompromising class solidarity in the very next paragraph. He noted that while workers around the world were still becoming aware of their common interests, capitalists had already abandoned all pretense of looking out for national best interests: "Morgan, Rockefeller or Carnegie will give work even to a Chinese and let their own country's workingmen starve."[298] National barriers were melting away and only international co-operation guaranteed happiness—but should working-class solidarity be extended to the Chinese?

This chapter examines the views of Finnish socialists on the immigration debate and especially the so-called Oriental question, which aroused heated discussion in the early twentieth century within the U.S. Socialist party and in the labor movement more generally. Scholarship on the Finnish-American labor movement has omitted this immigration debate in its exam-

298 A .B. Lappi: *Taistele ja voita.* Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1905, p. 10.

ination of the early years of the Finnish Socialist Federation.[299] This is understandable considering that immigration was never a major issue for Finnish-American socialists, preoccupied as they were with questions like industrial unionism, the position of the language federations in the party and prohibition, as well as the all-important issue of cultural uplift. Still, Finnish socialists could ill afford to completely ignore the immigration debate. They were seeking general acceptance within the Socialist party, and hence it was necessary for them to formulate a position on a question of obvious importance for American socialists. Many political issues that were close to the hearts of Finnish socialists, like industrial unionism and anti-imperialism, were also connected to the immigration debate.

Moreover, as immigrants whose own racial fitness for labor organizing had been under suspicion, Finnish socialists approached the question of Asiatic exclusion from an ambivalent position. In the debate on immigration, however, it was not obvious how Finns should seek to dispel this ambivalence. Should Finns support Asiatic exclusionism so as to further distance themselves from the stain of the racially unfit? Or should they instead contest the very idea that a people's fitness for the labor movement was conditioned by race or nationality? Both strategies had the potential to dispel suspicions regarding Finnish workers' own abilities, but also had greatly diverging implications in other ways. What added to the issue's significance was the lingering doubt about Finns' own racial position between Europe and Asia. Indeed, the question of Finnish "Mongolianness" was taken up for the first time by a U.S. court just as the debate on the Oriental question was heating up in the U.S. Socialist Party, and immediately after the Mesabi Range strike of 1907.

299 Carl Ross (1977), Michael Karni (1975, 1977), or Peter Kivisto (1984), for example, do not mention the debate.

2.1. Are Finns Mongols?

In many ways, U.S. anti-immigration discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries perceived Asian immigrants as the benchmark of undesirability. In 1882, the Chinese became the first racial or national group to be completely excluded from immigration to the United States. Subsequently, the desirability and racial fitness of all other immigrant groups was assessed with these ultimate undesirables in mind. Thus, a desirable immigrant was, in many ways, as far removed as possible from someone of Chinese descent.[300] Indeed, the Chinese became a recurring metaphor in the immigration debates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States. Japanese, Korean, South Asian, Mexican, and, from the 1890s, Southern and Eastern European immigrants, were all likened to the Chinese. Like the Chinese, these groups were deemed racially deficient, inherently servile and thus susceptible to accepting low-wage labor and poor living standards. For some commentators, Italians became "the Chinese of Europe" or "European coolies."[301] Finns could also be likened to the Chinese. A writer from Michigan's Copper Country noted in 1887 that "The old settlers looked down upon [the Finns] with the same sort of aversion as the west coast people do on the heathen Chinee." [302]

There were grounds to go beyond metaphor in these comparisons to Asians in the case of Finns and other East Europeans. For some Nativists, as Erika Lee has observed, East Europeans were not only "like the Chinese," but in fact *were* Asians.[303] Several racial theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were convinced that Finns, Slavs, Turks and other peoples inhab-

300 Lee 2005, p. 124–125.

301 Donna Gabaccia: "The 'Yellow Peril' and the 'Chinese of Europe': Global Perspectives on Race and Labor, 1815–1930." In Jan Lucassen & Leo Lucassen (ed.): *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives.* Peter Lang: Bern, pp. 177–179; Lee 2003, p. 35.

302 Quoted in Lankton 1991, p. 212.

303 Lee 2003, p. 35; Kivisto & Leinonen 2014, pp. 79–80.

iting the eastern fringes of Europe were not racially European or Caucasian, but were actually of Mongolian or Asiatic racial stock. In the Finnish case, there was a strong scientific background for these claims. The classic European racial theorists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach and Arthur Comte de Gobineau, had categorized the Finns as Asians and Mongolians in their widely read and highly influential racial mappings of humankind.[304] From Europe, these theories had also made their way into American academia. The sociologist and anti-immigration activist Edward Ross, for example, conflated East European immigrants with Asians: "Who reflects that, with Chinese and Japanese, Finns and Magyars, Bulgars and Turks, about half a million more or less Mongolian in blood have cast their lot with us and will leave their race stamp upon the American people of the future?"[305]

During and after the 1907 Mesabi Range strike, which had been dominated by Finnish miners, these racial ideas started to resonate among some prominent pro-company citizens in the area. The *Eveleth News* contended in its editorials, for example, that the "anarchistic" Finns who were on strike were "not fit to become citizens."[306] When John Svan, a Finnish miner from Eveleth, Minnesota, applied to become a naturalized citizen in September 1907, his papers were left to gather dust on the desk of a local government official. On 8 January, 1908, the District Attorney John C. Sweet finally held up Svan's citizenship application on the grounds that it did not meet the racial requirement of U.S. citizenship. Sweet argued that "[B]eing a Finn," Svan was "Mongolian and not a 'white person' within the meaning of Sec. 2169, United States Rev. Stat.," which restricted naturalization rights to "free white persons" and people of African nativity or descent. Svan's case was interpreted as setting a precedent: soon after the Svan decision another fifteen Finnish applicants also had their

304 Kemiläinen 1993, 60–62, 139–144.

305 Quoted in Kivisto & Leinonen 2014, p. 79.

306 Quoted in Karni 1977, p. 77.

papers rejected because of their Mongolian racial descent. Sweet legitimated his ruling by referring to racial science, as well as citing recent political unrest in St. Louis County: Finns' flocking to socialism – an "East Asian philosophy" – was proof enough of their distinctly un-Western frame of mind.[307]

The John Svan case was a part of a series of legal battles that focused on the definition of whiteness in the United States in the early twentieth century, although the little-known case is often omitted in scholarly accounts.[308] At the turn of the century, the acquisition of formal U.S. citizenship emerged for the first time in U.S. history as a "burning question on the national agenda."[309] As immigration grew and talk of restriction intensified, a debate erupted regarding what groups could lay claim to citizenship. In the original Naturalization Act of 1790 the right to naturalize had been restricted to "free white persons." The law had been extended to include "aliens of African nativity and persons of African descent" in 1870, but it continued to exclude Asians – or persons of the "Mongolian race" – throughout the first half of the twentieth century.[310] Indeed, most early 1900s court cases regarding immigration revolved around defining the line between whiteness and Asianness. Cases on the racial differences between Asians and Africans, on the other hand, were non-existent, thereby illustrating how whiteness was still conflated with *de facto* citizenship.

Most new immigrant groups never had to go to court to prove their non-Asianness. Italians, Poles, Jews, South Slavs and other Europeans were "white on arrival," and their claim to the status

307 Kivisto & Leinonen 2014, pp. 75–76.

308 Ariela Gross, for example, does not mention the case in her discussion of legal battles for immigrant nationalities' whiteness in the early 1900s. See Ariela J. Gross: *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America.* Harvard University Press: Cambridge 2010, pp. 211–252. Roediger, however, mentions the case in his *Working Toward Whiteness.* See Roediger 2005, p. 63.

309 Gross 2010, p. 212.

310 Gross 2010, pp. 215–223. It was not until 1952 that racial restrictions were finally abolished from the U.S. naturalization law.

of being free white persons was never seriously questioned.[311] Immigrants from East Asia, the Middle East and Mexico faced more of a struggle to secure their right to racialized citizenship, with some managing better than others. Whereas Japanese and Indians, for example, were deemed non-white despite legal challenges, Syrians and Armenians were accepted as white when applicants from these nationalities took cases to court. As Ariela Gross notes, these definitions of whiteness were not givens: "Only in retrospect it is obvious who 'was' and who 'wasn't' white – precisely because of the legal and social processes set in motion by the trials of racial identity."[312]

The John Svan case ended up with Finns being recognized as being firmly on the white side of the white-Asian divide. Only two weeks after Sweet's original decision on Finnish non-whiteness, the case was re-examined in a U.S. District Court in Duluth. The case was soon thrown out of court. In his final deliberations, the presiding judge William Cant argued that while there was ethnological evidence to show that Finns had indeed mixed with Mongolians in the past, this ancient miscegenation did not affect Finns' current racial status. He argued that "The question is not whether a person had or had not [Mongolian] ancestry, but whether he is now a 'white person' within the meaning of that term as usually understood." When explaining in more detail this "usual understanding" of whiteness, Cant simply explained that Finns did not look non-white. They were almost universally blue or gray-eyed, light-haired and of fair complexion, whereas Finns with yellow or brown skin were "an unusual sight." Disregarding the anthropological evidence, which he viewed as being non-substantial, the judge ruled in favor of Finns' whiteness in no uncertain terms: "If the Finns were originally Mongols, modifying

311 Jacobson 1999, pp. 223–245; Guglielmo 2004; Gross 2010, pp. 212–213; Guglielmo & Fox 2012.

312 Gross 2010, p. 213.

influences have continued until they are now among the whitest people in Europe."[313]

In this privileging of racial common sense over anthropological evidence, Judge Cant was in sync with contemporary judicial practice. Early twentieth-century courts rarely accepted anthropological evidence when determining racial status unless it corroborated their commonsensical image of whiteness. Gross notes that "[W]hen science offered contradictory or counterintuitive answers, courts always returned to racial common sense."[314] Since anthropological theories of Finns' Mongol ancestry contradicted the evidence before Cant's racially conditioned eyes, they had no bearing on his decision.

The John Svan case can be deemed as an example of Finns' ambiguous whiteness in the United States in the early twentieth century. Indeed, the case provides a good illustration of the anthropological disagreements about Finns' racial status. Moreover, it highlights how anthropological theories could be put to political use in specific instances of labor strife. Yet, from a legal perspective, the case illustrates how firmly Finnish immigrants stood on the white side of the white-Asian divide. Sweet's ruling only stood for two weeks until it was overturned, and there were no further attempts at denying Finns the right to seek naturalization. What is more, Cant's musings on the appearance of Finns demonstrate how *little* ambiguity there was about Finnish whiteness in the commonsensical racial mindset of Minnesotans. For Cant, Finns were not simply *quite* white people; they were among the *whitest*. While Finnish whiteness could be challenged with ethnographic evidence, it was much harder to assert that Finns were not white according to common sense color categories. Moreover, since racial common sense trumped other evidence in courts, Finns' legal whiteness was never seriously threatened in the United States. Thus, the John Svan case merely solidified a well-established ju-

313 William A. Cant: "Memorandum." In John Swan papers, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota. See also Kivisto & Leinonen 2014, p. 76.

314 Gross 2010, p. 10.

dicial practice: Finns appeared white and were thus "free white persons" within the meaning of U.S. naturalization law.

The mere *possibility* of achieving citizenship did not necessarily mean that potential citizens were actually treated as white persons. As Cybelle Fox and Irene Bloemraad have illustrated, white legal status did not necessarily translate into equal opportunity to acquire citizenship in practice: although Mexicans and European immigrants were both white by law, the naturalization level of the former was much lower than the corresponding figure for the latter group. Fox and Bloemraad explain this discrepancy by noting that Mexicans in the Southwest, unlike European immigrants in the Northeast and Midwest, were treated as non-whites in practice.[315] The naturalization rates of Finnish immigrants were lower than those of Northern and Western European immigrants, but higher than other Southern and Eastern European immigrants.[316] Considering these naturalization rates, it seems evident that Finnish inclusion within the realms of white citizenship was on much firmer ground than, for example, Mexican immigrants'.

While Finnish inclusion within the umbrella of white citizenship might have been clear to the federal authorities, the contours of U.S. racial common sense were, however, only partially evident for the newcomers themselves. While latter-day historians can infer that Finns faced little threat of being denied their right to naturalize, contemporary Finnish immigrants were understandably less convinced. Among the Finnish-American bourgeoisie and religious establishment, there was genuine concern that the perceived irrational radicalism of Finnish socialists threatened to push Finns down the racial hierarchy of their new homeland. One writer warned that "What is certain is that our socialist group's course of action must change, because the national-minded [Finns] in this country will never allow that our revolutionaries with their rowdiness put our nationality into the position of the

315 Cybelle Fox & Irene Bloemraad: "Beyond 'White by Law': Explaining the Gulf in Citizenship Acquisition between Mexican and European Immigrants, 1930." *Social Forces*, Vol. 94, No. 1, 2015, pp. 181–207.

316 Hoglund 1960, p. 112; Kostiainen 2014, pp. 148–151.

Chinese."[317] While immigrants did not always fully understand how American color categories were defined, they nevertheless perceived the social advantages that were attached to whiteness and the dangers that were inherent in being classified as non-white. Being assigned "to the position of the Chinese" would strip them of naturalization rights, impede their right to freely immigrate to America, and, in more dystopian visions, it would make them the target of anti-Asian pogroms. These fears held special currency in a political atmosphere in which talk of the "yellow peril" and war with Japan was rife.[318] One conservative journalist worried about "What would the fate of Finns be if Americans were led to believe that they were Mongolians and then a war with Japan was to break out? Then the life of a Finn would not be worth much in this country."[319]

To prevent this calamity, the Finnish-American bourgeoisie and religious activists organized special "national councils" throughout the Midwest in the spring and summer of 1908. These councils roundly condemned socialist agitation, while showcasing Finnish adherence to law and order and to declare Finnish loyalty to Christianity, civilization and American civic values. The meetings were often disturbed by socialist speakers,[320] but the conservatives who had convened managed to issue "unanimous" statements in the name of Finnish majority that were published in English-language newspapers. One such declaration read:

> We abhor and condemn the actions of the Socialists in their past acts and inflammatory speeches disgracing the Christian Religion

317 "Kansallisuusasia ja sosialistis-kumoukselliset." *Amerikan Kaiku*, 28.2. 1908.

318 Masuda Hajimu: "Rumors of War: Immigration Disputes and the Social Construction of American-Japanese Relations, 1905–1913." *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 2009, p. 16.

319 –s: "Kansa walweille! Se mongolialaiskysymys." *Amerikan Kaiku*, 28.1. 1908.

320 "Police Eject Three Socialists." *Duluth News-Tribune*, 28.2.1908; "Ten Socialists Placed on Trial." *Duluth News-Tribune*, 7.3.1908.

> and civilization, tending to destroy the moral and chaste welfare of home and society, laying the foundations for atheism, corruption and anarchy […] Therefore, let it be resolved that on behalf of the majority of the Finns, that we can no longer silently bear the loss of the employers' confidence which has been caused by the instigation of the Socialists, and on the returning of that confidence depends the success and welfare of our homes.[321]

Thus, the conservative Finnish-American response to perceived threats against their racial status in U.S. ethnic hierarchies was to emphasize Finnish connections to Western civilization and Christianity. Here, the conceptions of Finnish immigrants were similar to those of many other European and Middle Eastern immigrant groups, who also defended their whiteness with reference to their nationality's civilized history or ability to behave respectfully. In her discussion of Syrian immigrants and race, Sarah Gualtieri has noted that when first countering challenges to their status as whites in America, Syrians often formulated their claims for whiteness with reference to religion and civilization. Reared in the Ottoman *millet* system, which stressed religious affiliation over other forms of difference, early Syrian migrants sought to counter Americans' suspicions as to their racial standing by emphasizing their devout Christianity and ancient traditions of civilization. It was only later that Syrians learned to define their whiteness by stressing their difference to blacks and Asians.[322] Finnish religious and bourgeois leaders also countered suspicions about their whiteness by stressing their strong devotion to Christianity and civilization. By drawing a stark contrast with their socialist brethren and depicting them as an isolated anomaly, the conservatives chose to emphasize their own ability to behave in a respectful, Christian and civilized manner. They also sought to lay claim to proper manliness, a status threatened by socialist women's prominent role in labor activism. Hibbing's conservative Finns, for example, denounced "all demonstrations

321 Quoted in Kivisto 1984, pp. 103–104.

322 Gualtieri 2009, pp. 69–72. See also Vellon 2017, p. 35.

under the red flag […] as a degradation of manhood."[323] Finnish-American conservatives conflated the category of whiteness with that of civilization.

Socialist newspapers were less concerned about achieving acceptance from U.S. employers, bourgeois newspapers and Republican or Democratic politicians. They ridiculed conservative Finns' attempts to placate American public opinion, viewing them as being a mere appeasement of capitalist interests. The editors of *Raivaaja* in Massachusetts ridiculed the scientific credentials of the claims of Finnish "Mongolianness," and saw racial categories as mere reflections of the social status that a given immigrant group had in the eyes of American capitalists: "This research of racial origin might be a bit unscientific, but it works for Americans. The results of this kind of science are the following: If we Finns are the humble servants of the Republicans, then the blood that flows in our veins is of a Germanic variety – we are 'white-skinned' […] but if we are unionists or socialists, then we are 'black sheep,' 'Mongolians,' maybe even 'blackamoors.'" The editors dismissed promulgations of racial pride as vacuous and at odds with the more important notion of one's pride as a worker: "We do not give a hoot about what race we are – the main thing is that we are people, people who lift their noses from the dirt, who are not against other workers when living in this country as workers."[324]

Socialists in the Midwest were also warned not to participate in the celebrations organized by conservative Finns in the wake of Judge Cant's decision on John Svan's whiteness. When a group of prominent Finnish businessmen in Duluth started to collect money to purchase a present for Judge Cant, the Finnish socialist association in Hancock published an open letter in *Työmies*, in which it appealed to Finns in the town not to participate in this "clownish business." The socialists declared that Finns would rather be a nationality looked down upon by capitalists than a

323 "Finns Denounce the Red Flag at Hibbing." *Duluth News-Tribune*, 8.3. 1908.

324 "Politiikka ja Suomen kansan rotuperä." *Raivaaja*, 28.1.1908.

group of servile fools who did their utmost to kowtow to their oppressors.[325] The left-wing press was not alone in criticizing the conservative Finns' celebration of the Cant decision, as Oregon's *Lännen Suometar* joined labor papers in condemning such behavior.[326]

Indeed, the racial theories that linked Finns with Asians were not anathema to the former, as was the case later for some interwar and postwar era community activists. In his writings, for example, Matti Kurikka celebrated the origin of Finns as being on the Asian steppes, and used these racial theories to develop ideas regarding the relatedness of the Finnish population of Sointula to the area's Native American population.[327] Kurikka's ideas were far from anomalous in the context of turn-of-the-century Finnish nationalist discourse. As Antti Häkkinen and Miika Tervonen have noted, for example, pre-independence Finnish nationalism in the early 1900s was much less insistent on stressing the racial purity of the nation than the strain of nationalism that became prominent in Finland after independence in 1917. The nationalism of Zachris Topelius, for example, celebrated the racial, linguistic and tribal mixture of Finland,[328] while J.V. Snellmann, another prominent nineteenth-century nationalist intellectual, hoped that the racially mixed Finnish people could prove the error of European theories of race, which equated intellect and strength with the pure Caucasian race.[329] Indeed, sympathetic ref-

325 Hancockin S.S. osaston Puhuja- ja Keskusteluseura: "Avoin kirje Amerikan suomalaisille, erään narrimaisen puuhan johdosta." *Työmies*, 1.2.1908.

326 John I. Kolehmainen: "Suomalainen rotu punnittavana yhdysvaltalaisessa oikeudessa." In *Siirtokansan kalenteri 1949*. Päivälehti Kustannusyhtiö: Duluth 1949, p. 44.

327 Savola 1942, p. 86.

328 Antti Häkkinen & Miika Tervonen: "Johdanto." In Antti Häkkinen, Panu Pulma & Miika Tervonen (eds.): *Vieraat kulkijat – tutut talot. Näkökulmia etnisyyden ja köyhyyden historiaan*. SKS: Helsinki 2005, pp. 7–36. See also Tervonen 2014.

329 Jouko Jokisalo: "Rotuteorioiden suomalaiset – olkaamme mongoleja." In Jouko Jokisalo & Raisa Simola: *Kulttuurisia kohtaamisia ja solmukohtia*. Like: Helsinki 2010, pp. 20–21.

erences to Finns' Mongolian or Asian racial origins continued in the leftist press throughout the early twentieth century.[330] Indeed, in his 1967 examination of Finnish racial origins and the "false" image of Finns' Mongolianness, the clergyman and amateur historian Armas Holmio lamented that Finns could mostly blame themselves for Americans mistaking them for Asians.[331]

Holmio's lamentations reflect the anxieties about the so-called Mongol stigma that continued well into the interwar era and indeed beyond. Discussions of Finnish Americans' postwar relationship with race and whiteness often foreground these anxieties.[332] In 1957, the conservative organization Knights of Kaleva published a book-length study on the issue, written by the amateur anthropologist, S. C. Olin. The book, as Peter Kivisto has noted, is an exercise in "abysmal scholarship," but it illustrates the anxieties that some Finnish Americans felt regarding Finns' ambiguous whiteness.[333] For many, these anxieties were long-standing. When a Minneapolis school curriculum committee discussed what material to include in the teaching of ethnic history in the 1970s, the Finnish members of the committee prioritized the inclusion of "data which would prove that Finns are White."[334] These anxieties were not only a conservative preserve. The socialist *Raivaaja* published an article in 1957, in which it thanked one of its readers who had asked an American professor to correct his "false" reference to Finns as Mongols.[335] While

330 See, for example, Pekka Paavilainen: "Buttesta." *Punikki*, 15.11.1929.

331 Holmio 1967, pp. 50–51.

332 See, for example, Reino W. Hakala: "Races." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 5.6.1945; 7.6.1945; Kolehmainen & Hill 1951, pp. v–vi. Wasastjaerna 1957, p. 2.

333 Kivisto 1984, p. 129.

334 Karni 1975, p. 148. See also Kivisto 1984, p. 129.

335 Evi: "Me ja mongolit – professori oikaisee." *Raivaaja*, 15.11.1957. Ideas about the non-European origin of Finns continue to be a sensitive subject for some Finnish Americans. See Robert Kohtala: "Co-ops are not Finnish in Origin." *Daily Mining Gazette*, 30.9.2017. In his letter to the editor, Kohtala complains that a writer in the *Daily Mining Gazette* has referred to Finns as being non-European in origin. He writes: "Finns have the highest percentage of people with blond hair of any ethnic group. Blond hair is

these anxieties have received much attention, it is still important to note – as Holmio grudgingly acknowledged in 1967 – that many Finnish Americans were not particularly concerned about the Mongol label. Consider, for example, the problems faced by the amateur anthropologist Olin when collecting material for his book on Finnish whiteness. When conducting his craniological fieldwork among Ohio Finns in the 1950s, he was disappointed about the "lack of interest and cooperation on the part of some Finnish people" who had "refused to be examined." Moreover, Olin complained about how he was informed "by some Finnish people that I was wasting my time and money."[336] These disinterested Finns are an important reminder that not all Finns viewed the Mongol label as troublesome.

Yet, while few Finnish socialists, or probably most other Finnish immigrants, were concerned about Finns' racial background, they were aware already in the early 1900s that associations with Asians carried negative connotations in their new homeland. Socialist newspapers advocated that Finnish workers should apply for U.S. citizenship,[337] which is why threats to the right to seek naturalization were also concerning for leftists. They were also extremely concerned about perception that Finns were a backward nationality, and socialist agitation was primarily preoccupied with elevating the Finns to the status of other "civilized" worker nationalities. Thus, the socialist press dismissed the conservative anxieties about Finns' decreasing reputation. Instead, they noted that far from being a respected, progressive nationality in the past, Finns had been among the least developed. This backwardness had manifested itself primarily as "scabbing," which was deemed to be the gravest sin for a working-class nationality. One socialist writer noted that while the Finns had been respected in

not a Mongolian trait. Eighty percent of Finns have blue or gray eyes, also not a Mongolian trait." I thank James Kurtti for bringing this article to my attention and for sending me a copy.

336 S. C. Olin: "How the book *Finlandia* came to be written." *Kalevainen*, 1956, p. 22.

337 Kostiainen 2014, pp. 150–151.

the past by the American bourgeoisie, they "had a terrible reputation" among the American workers. Indeed, he adds that "They were considered the lowliest people in many places. The Finns really were famous – as scabs." Exploiters held Finnishness in high esteem because they believed Finns were ignorant, backward and thus easy to manipulate. It was only when Finns embraced socialism *en masse* that their bad reputation began to evaporate. A writer in *Työmies* noted that "The real value of the Finns – if we are for a moment ardent 'nationals' – has risen only during the past few years and it is all thanks to socialism." Finnishness had now been "elevated to the heights of its honorability, and it is all thanks to international social democracy."[338] Thus, Finnish socialists did not challenge their conservative compatriots' developmentalist rhetoric, but rather turned it on its head. Far from degrading Finnishness, socialism helped Finns to elevate themselves to the level of other enlightened and civilized nationalities.

Yet, while Finnish socialists were concerned about their civilizational status, this did not translate into fears about losing citizenship – at least on racial grounds. Numerous editorials in the socialist newspapers continued to advocate for their readers to acquire citizenship. The newspapers also published instructions on how to correctly file first papers with the authorities and what to expect in naturalization hearings.[339] They also published accounts from readers who had applied for citizenship in order to show how easy the process was.[340] In its 1909 convention, the Finnish Socialist Federation passed a motion that required that

338 –pi: "Suomalaisten arvo kohoaa." *Työmies*, 7.1.1908. See also Juho Reittu: "Kansallisuusasiasta." *Työmies*, 12.3.1908; "Suora sana vastustajillemme." *Työmies*, 7.4.1908.

339 See, for example., "Asetuksia kansalaistuttamisesta." In *Köyhälistön Nuija I 1907*. TyömiehenKustannusyhtiö: Hancock, Mich. 1906, pp. 23–25; "Kansalaistuttakaa itsenne!" *Raivaaja*, 17.11.1908; "Suomalaisten leväperäisyys kansalaistuttamisessa on huomion esineenä." Työmies, 5.3.1912; F. Westerlund: "Siirtolaisnaisten olisi hankittava itselleen kansalaispaperit." *Työmies*, 15.3.1912.

340 Aug. V. Siren: "Kokemuksia kansalaistuttamis-asioissa ja kehoituksia niille jotka omistavat n.s. ensimäiset paperit." *Raivaaja*, 6.10.1910.

all locals assist their members to acquire citizenship as soon as possible. One delegate even hoped that first papers would be a requirement for party membership.[341] The pressure exerted by the socialist press and the Finnish Socialist Federation for Finns to naturalize as U.S. citizens was so intense that one offended unnaturalized reader was moved to ask if citizenship was all it took to be a good socialist. He felt he had been reduced to a "zero" as a socialist just because of his unnaturalized status.[342] Newspapers were often gravely concerned about Finns' unwillingness to become naturalized citizens. This reticence was perceived as stemming from Finns' own insularity and lack of engagement with the outside world, rather than in any doubts about that they might be denied citizenship because of their racial status. Indeed, the instructions on how to complete the first papers almost never remarked on race – it was thought self-evident that Finns would identify themselves as being white.

2.2. Empire and Subaltern Solidarity

The politics of citizenship were thus a key aspect in teaching Finnish immigrants about how race was connected to power in the United States. But the political imagination of Finnish socialists was never confined to the nation-state of the United States. The political imagination of early twentieth-century Finnish immigrants had been shaped in Finland by their ambiguous relationship to empire, and the politics of empire continued to inform their thinking in the United States. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were characterized by imperial expansion. Eric Hobsbawm has called the era from the mid-1870s to the First World War the age of empire.[343] Before their arrival to the

341 Syrjälä [1910], p. 247.

342 J. L–g: "Onko sosialisti nolla jos hän ei omista kansalaispapereita." *Raivaaja*, 26.8.1909.

343 Eric Hobsbawm: *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914.* Sphere Books: Cardinal 1987.

United States, Finns had been subjects of Russia, another expansive continental empire, and had also been economically, politically and culturally connected to other European empires. On the one hand, these imperial connections encouraged Finns to share in Europeans' sense of imperial superiority over non-European peoples. Yet, on the other hand, Finns' subordinate position in the imperial order also encouraged more critical approaches towards imperialism. This ambiguity shaped Finnish immigrants' understanding of world politics. It formed the ideological grounding as regards to how radical immigrants approached the interrelated questions of imperialism and immigration.

Since Finland became a part of the Russian Empire in 1809, Finns had participated in Russia's imperial campaigns in Siberia, Alaska and the Caucasus as military officers, soldiers and in a variety of other functions. In the late nineteenth century, Finns also participated in the imperial campaigns of other European empires in Africa and Asia. Finnish seamen, for example, served on Belgian steamships on the Congo River, while Finnish missionaries worked in German Southwest Africa and Finnish settlers helped the British to establish control over Rhodesia.[344] Cultural artefacts that helped to normalize European control over non-Europeans also circulated widely in the turn-of-the-century Finland, encouraging many Finns to identify with the purportedly civilized West.[345]

These activities had a profound effect on how contemporary Finns understood their position in the world: participation in colonial campaigns, whether as military officers or as newspaper readers, encouraged them to imagine themselves as part of the civilization mission of white Europeans in the uncivilized darkness of Siberia, Rhodesia, Ovamboland and other colonized lands. While Finland possessed no colonies, it was complicit in the expansionist agendas of Russia, Britain and other European

344 Kivinen 2003. Löytty 2006; Särkkä 2016.

345 Rastas & Löytty 2011, p. 28; Rastas 2012; Löytty 2006; Leila Koivunen: *Terweisiä Kiinasta ja Afrikasta! Suomen lähetysseuran näyttelytoiminta 1870–1930-luvuilla*. Suomen Lähetysseura: Helsinki 2011; Koivunen 2015.

empires.[346] Thus, it did not always require a great imaginative leap for Finnish immigrants to the United States to embrace the imperial politics of their newly-adopted homeland. Just as it was supposedly natural for the more civilized Russians or British to subjugate and enlighten the backward Siberians or Zulus, it was natural for the white Americans to assume tutelage over the less developed Ojibwe, Filipinos and Cubans. Finnish soldiers participated in the Spanish-American War, for example, and after the war a group of Finnish entrepreneurs established a farming "colony" in Cuba.[347] The Cuban venture was widely advertised in Finnish-American labor newspapers, and the small Finnish colony that did emerge in Itabo was developed according to socialist principles.[348]

As this suggests, socialist Finns were no less susceptible to the lure of colonial rhetoric than their non-radical compatriots. Indeed, there were some aspects in Marxist thought that could encourage positive identification with imperial missions. For Marx, capitalist class society was a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of socialism, as it could only develop in a society with high surplus production. According to Marxist thought, capitalism was a progressive force in feudal societies as it prepared the material and social ground for socialism.[349] This notion of capitalism as progress led some Marxists to frame European imperialism as a necessary step in human history, which would help the pre-capitalist economies of Asia, Africa and the Americas to move forward in the predetermined trajectory of historical devel-

346 On the concept of colonial complicity, see Keskinen et. al. 2011, pp. 16–46.

347 Ritva Jarva: "Cuba – 'Paradise' for Finns." In Vilho Niitemaa (ed.): *Publications of the Institute of General History of Turku Finland. Nr. 3. Studies Studien Études*. Kirjapaino Polytypos: Turku 1971, pp. 23–38. The company involved in the effort was called the East Cuban Colonization Company and the project's instigators frequently depicted their mission in terms of colonial tutelage. Cuba could become a "real paradise," the key initiator Eero Erkko remarked, "provided that capable people from Scandinavia and Finland go to work there."

348 Jarva 1971, p. 35.

349 Cohen 1978, pp. 213–215.

opment. The German socialist Eduard Bernstein, for example, argued that German imperialism was a force for progress and that Germans, as a people more developed than Africans, had a right to acquire the lands of the "savages," who had only a "conditional" right to the lands in which they dwelled. Bernstein noted: "The higher civilization ultimately can claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation, of the land gives the historical legal title to its use."[350]

In their descriptions of world politics, Finnish socialists could resort to colonial stereotypes. Gary Kaunonen has noted that in 1909 the satirical magazine *Amerikan Matti*, published by Finnish-American socialists, printed a disparaging caricature of a black man. Kaunonen states disappointedly that Finnish radicals, despite their stated convictions of working-class solidarity, were capable of disparaging another oppressed group: "Underneath all the [Finnish socialists'] early rhetoric about working-class solidarity, there was perhaps a latent and episodic racism regarding African Americans."[351] A more extensive examination of the cartoons in various humorous magazines published by Finnish-American socialists gives further credence to this contention. During the First World War, for example, the socialist magazine *Lapatossu* frequently used racist caricatures to make anti-war political points. In its cartoons of the British war effort, the paper continuously mocked Britain's stated war ambitions by contrasting its high-minded rhetoric of defending civilization with its use of purportedly uncivilized Asian and African troops from its colonies in its war effort. The cartoons, drawn by K. A. Suvanto, frequently depicted the African troops as cannibals who ate their opponents; caricatures of Asians were equally dehumanizing (*Image 2*). Thus, colonial imagery and civilizational hierarchies had a

350 Eduard Bernstein: *Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation.* Schocken Books: New York 1961 [1898], pp. 177–178. On Bernstein's thinking on evolution and imperialism, see also Pittenger 1993, p. 171; Weikart 1999, pp. 195–214.

351 Kaunonen 2010, p. 86.

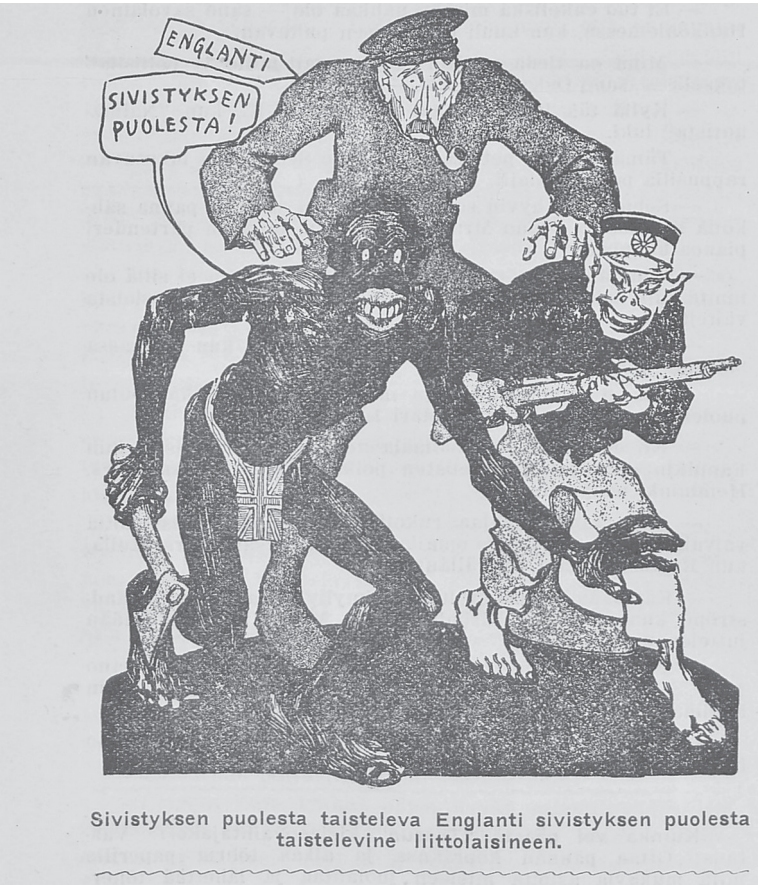

Image 2: The caption reads: "England that fights for civilization together with its allies who are also fighting for civilization." A First World War-era cartoon in the socialist humor magazine Lapatossu. The bubble reads: "For civilization!" Source: Lapatossu, 1.12.1914. (Screenshot image from the digitized newspaper collections of the National Library of Finland).

decided influence on how Finnish socialists thought about racial divisions.[352]

Thus, socialist Finns were encouraged by both their background in Finland and engagement with Marxist evolutionism to embrace the logic of colonial tutelage. However, this embracement was qualified by Finns' ambiguous position in the contemporary imperial order. Before their arrival in the United States, Finns had been subjects of the Russian Empire, which became increasingly aggressive in its policies towards Finland in the late 1890s and the early 1900s. Just like the discourse on the legitimacy of imperial power, the discourse questioning this legitimacy also drew on international (or inter-imperial) influences.[353] The world that late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Finns inhabited was not characterized by a monolithic discourse of European racial superiority and the white man's colonial entitlement, but by a contested, albeit unsymmetrical, field of ideas and arguments where imperialism and racism were not only reproduced and reapplied, but also confronted and contested. Just as circulation of newspapers, letters, telegraph reports, material goods, and human beings brought racist and colonialist ideas to Finnish consumption, the same process made Finnish immigrants acutely aware that there were principled people convincingly challenging these ideas.[354] Indeed, Finnish discussions regarding the Russo-Finnish relationship drew on anti-imperialist thinking in Europe and beyond. Many intellectuals made connections between Russia's unjust treatment of Finland and broader trends in world politics. The sociologists Pekka Rantanen and Petri Ruuska have referred to this sensitivity to global injustices as the "wis-

352 "Saksan tammi." *Lapatossu*, 15.10.1914; "Sotavankeudessa Saksassa." *Lapatossu*, 1.11.1914; "Sivistyksen puolesta taisteleva Englanti sivistyksen puolesta taistelevine liittolaisineen." *Lapatossu*, 1.12.1914; "Tuliaisia." *Lapatossu*, 1.4.1915; "Sivistyneiden sodankävijäin leireiltä." *Lapatossu*, 15.6.1915.

353 Frederick Cooper: *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History.* University of California Press: Berkeley 2005, pp. 22–24; Burbank & Cooper 2010, pp. 449–450.

354 Burbank & Cooper 2010, pp. 326–329.

dom of the subaltern" (*alistetun viisaus*).[355] The inferior position of Finns in European racial theories could also encourage skepticism towards ideas of racial purity and colonial entitlement. Professor Arvo Grotenfelt, a key late nineteenth-century Finnish nationalist, for example, criticized Houston Stewart Spencer's racial hatred and belief in Germanic superiority. He countered Spencer's racism by lauding the virtues of cultural mixing and the developmental potential of every nationality. His defense of Finnish developmental capabilities extended to a critique of European colonialism.[356] While this anti-imperialist sensitivity was later largely lost, as Finnish nationalists engaged in their own assimilatory campaigns against minorities,[357] the notion of shared solidarity between subaltern nations remained an important feature of Finnish political discourse in the early twentieth century. It also continued to inform the thinking of Finnish immigrants vis-à-vis world politics in the United States.

Many activists of the Finnish-American socialist movement arrived in the United States as political refugees who were fleeing either political repression or the 1901 conscription law that had extended imperial draft to Finland.[358] It is no coincidence that Finnish-American socialism began to gain ground after 1899, when St. Petersburg intensified its political repression in Finland. Many of the early activists of Finnish-American socialism fled

355 Rantanen & Ruuska "Alistetun viisaus". In *Kuriton kansa. Poliittinen mielikuvitus vuoden 1905 suurlakon ajan Suomessa*. Anttila, Anu-Hanna; Kauranen, Ralf; Löytty, Olli; Pollari, Mikko; Rantanen, Pekka & Ruuska, Petri Vastapaino, Tampere 2009, pp. 33–56.

356 Siltala 1999, p. 167.

357 Rantanen & Ruuska 2009, p. 55; Siltala 1999, p. 167.

358 On political repression and the 1901 law as a small push factor in immigration, see Kero 1996, p. 68. Socialist activists were not the only ones to emigrate, although they did have the greatest influence on the political life of Finnish Americans. In 1903, the liberal nationalists Eero Erkko and Severi Nuormaa, for example, fled from Finland to Brooklyn. There, they founded the *Amerikan Kaiku* newspaper, which advocated for anti-tsarist activism and was also an important outlet for early socialists' writings. See Sulkanen 1951, pp. 73–74.

this crackdown. A second wave of political émigrés arrived in the U.S. between 1906 and 1907, in the aftermath of the Great Strike of 1905 and the aborted Sveaborg Rebellion of 1906. For some of these refugees, the anti-tsarist struggle remained a priority. The head of Helsinki's Red Guard, Johan Kock, fled to the U.S. after having been implicated in the Sveaborg Rebellion. In the United States he founded the "Revolutionary Association of Finland and Russia," which advocated for violent resistance against the tsar.[359] While most Finnish-American socialists did not share Kock's preoccupation with the tsar's violent overthrow – his stint as the editor of *Raivaaja* in the fall of 1907 lasted for only seven weeks[360] – they still remained deeply involved in Finland's struggle for autonomy.[361] Russia's war against Japan of 1904–05, for example, was followed closely by America's Finns, and their sympathies were firmly with the Japanese.[362]

Like in Finland, engagement with the Russo-Finnish struggle in the United States also encouraged Finnish émigré activists to question the legitimacy of the imperial order and its legitimation with the rhetoric of civilization. This encouraged skepticism

359 Antti Kujala: *Vallankumous ja kansallinen itsemääräämisoikeus: Venäjän sosialistiset puolueet ja suomalainen radikalismi vuosisadan alussa*. Suomen historiallinen seura: Jyväskylä 1989; Antti Häkkinen: "Johan Adolf Kock: elämänkulkuanalyysi ja historia." *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*. Vol. 110, No. 4, 2012, pp. 378–389; Hummasti 1977, pp. 172–174; Sulkanen 1951, pp. 137–139. Similar movements emerged among immigrant leftists from other parts of the Russian Empire as well. For the case of the Polish Socialist Alliance, see Miller 2003, pp. 293–294; Mary E. Cygan: "The Polish-American Left." In Paul Buhle & Dan Georgakas (eds.): *The Immigrant Left in the United States*. The State University of New York Press: Albany 1996, pp. 148–184.

360 Hummasti 1977, pp. 172–174.

361 How Finland should be helped, however, was the subject of debate. See J[ohn] Välimäki: "Se kotimaamme kohtalo." *Työmies*, 30.11.1909; E. Savela: "Sanoja Suomen itsenäisyydestä." *Työmies*, 18.12.1909; William Risto: "Suomen itsenäisyys." *Työmies*, 23.12.1909.

362 See, for example, [Matti Kurikka]: "Historian kosto." *Aika*, 20.3.1904; Matti [Kurikka]: "Ajan varrelta." 1.4.1904; Matti Kurikka: "Tsaarius henkitoreissaan." *Aika*, 15.6.1904.

against the high-minded rhetoric of the Yellow Peril. An editorial in *Työmies* noted that American capitalists' appeals to the "Caucasian race's ideals" against the "Asiatic barbarism" of Japan or Russia were nothing but a fig leaf for the defense of U.S. capitalists' interests in Asia. Capitalism needed "beautiful words" in order to appeal to workers and to make them forget their own struggle.[363]

In the summer of 1908 an Indian socialist, Narayan Kesheo Krishna, undertook a lecture tour among America's Finnish socialists. The reactions of his audience illustrate how this ambiguity towards imperialism shaped Finnish socialists' thinking on Asia (*Image 3*).[364] Krishna visited the office of *Raivaaja* in Fitchburg in April 1908, and asked if he could deliver a series of lectures to Finnish audiences. Soon thereafter Finnish socialist newspapers started to advertise Krishna's lecture tour and urged their readers to attend these events and to invite him to speak in Finnish meeting halls. He toured socialist halls in Massachusetts, New York and in the Midwest. In all he spoke at some 90 events, of which 35 were to Finnish audiences.[365] He lectured to Finnish audiences in the east and Midwest from May to July. He also organized a more in-depth lecture series for Finnish socialist activists in Fitchburg, as well as giving interviews and writing articles for Finnish social-

363 "Aasialainen despotismi ja 'Kaukaasialaisen rodun ihanteet.'" *Työmies*, 23.7.1916. See also J[ohn] Fallström: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908.

364 Krishna had been born into an upper-caste family north of Bombay. He studied in Britain and lectured in Japan, Russia and other parts of the world. In 1904, he had been an Indian delegate at the Amsterdam International Socialist Congress. See S[everi] A[lanne].: "Viestejä kaukaisesta Intiasta." In *Köyhälistön Nuija III 1909*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1908, pp. 150–152.

365 S[everi] A[lanne].: "Viestejä kaukaisesta Intiasta." In *Köyhälistön Nuija III 1909*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1908, pp. 150–170; N. Krishna: "Tervehdys suomalaisille tovereille." *Työmies*, 9.7.1908; N. Krishna: "Indialainen tohtori, tov. N. Krishna." *Työmies*, 30.5.1908; "T:ri Krishnan luentomatka Minnesotassa." *Työmies*, 9.7.1908.

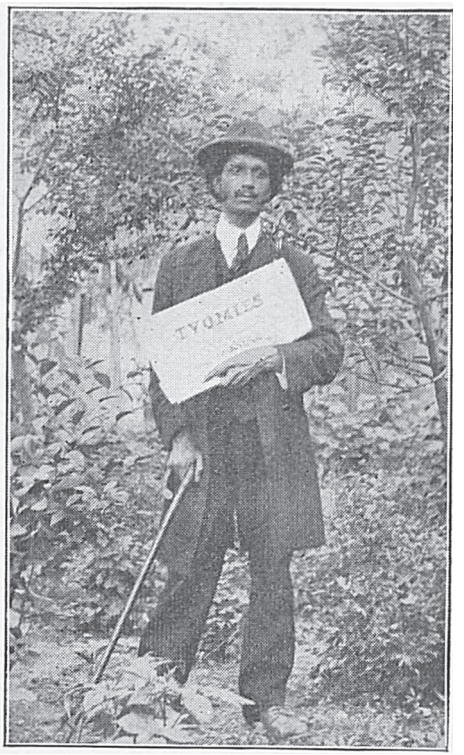

Image 3: The Indian socialist Narayan Krisna visiting the office of the Työmies newspaper in Hancock, Michigan in June 1908. Source: T:ri Krishna: "Joulun vietto Indiassa." Työmiehen joulu, 1.12.1908, p. 31. (Screenshot image from the digitized newspaper collections of the National Library of Finland.)

ist publications.[366] Articles on Krishna were also published in a socialist newspaper in Finland.[367] The Finnish-American conservative press ridiculed the socialists for entertaining the "Indian comrade," and news of his lecture tour even featured in non-socialist newspapers in Finland. One article, which was syndicated to at least a dozen Finnish newspapers, sardonically associated

366 Alanne 1908, p. 153; "Hindulainen tohtori N. Krishna." *Raivaaja*, 4.5.1908; K–v–ja: "Paikkakunnalta." *Raivaaja*, 4.5.1908; "Intialainen hindulainen sosialisti toveri tohtori N. Krishna." *Raivaaja*, 7.5.1908; A.L.: "Norwood, Mass." 19.5.1908; N. Krishna: "Indialainen tohtori, tov. N. Krishna." *Työmies*, 30.5.1908; "T:ri Krishnan luentomatka Minnesotassa." *Työmies*, 9.7.1908.

367 "Toveri Krishnasta." *Työmies*, 23.7.1908.

the comradeship of Finnish socialists with Krishna with a Finnish woman's marriage to a "Brahmin" man in Paris. The implication was clear: like the Finnish woman who had given birth to "black crown princes," the Finnish socialists were degrading themselves by associating with an Indian comrade.[368]

However, Finnish socialists in America (and in Finland) were enthusiastic about Krishna's lectures. In these lectures, Krishna covered a wide array of topics, including socialism in Asia, Theosophy, socialist Sunday schools, the challenges faced when attempting socialist organizational activities and "the development of humankind."[369] His special expertise, however, was in the development of socialism in India, Persia, China and other parts of Asia. In reviews of Krishna's lectures, Finnish socialist writers particularly appreciated Krishna's wide knowledge of world affairs, his internationalist outlook and his challenge to American parochial socialism. A Fitchburg socialist noted that "he makes a good impression to our smug American friends by showing that their great America is similar to other parts of the world."[370] Another writer stressed how Krishna had discredited the view that Asian workers posed a threat to "the more developed nations." He "illustrated how capitalism is doing its work in [Asia], too, and how socialism spreads there rapidly."[371] In Norwood, Massachusetts, Krishna's audience mostly consisted of local Finns and Poles. A local *Raivaaja* correspondent remarked that "'Yankees' seem to pay no mind to these kinds of events – their time has not yet arrived."[372]

The Finnish-American labor press published articles based on Krishna's lectures on socialist development and imperialist op-

368 See, for example, "Intialainen 'toweri' Krishna." *Lounais-Häme*, 2.8.1908; *Uusimaa*, 3.8.1908; *Suomalainen*, 5.8.1908; *Kaiku*, 7.8.1908; Etelä-*Suomi*, 13.8.1908.

369 "Tohtori Krishna luennoi." *Raivaaja*, 7.5.1908; "Paikkakunnalta." *Raivaaja*, 23.5.1908; "Paikkakunnalta." *Raivaaja*, 26.5.1908.

370 K–v–ja: "Paikkakunnalta." *Raivaaja*, 4.5.1908.

371 "Tohtori Krishna luennoi." *Raivaaja*, 7.5.1908.

372 A.L.: "Norwood, Mass." *Raivaaja*, 23.5.1908.

pression in Asia, which sought to correct "the completely wrong assumptions about [Asian] circumstances" that still persisted among people.[373] John Välimäki noted that Krishna had utterly demolished the notion that violent upheavals in Asia could be explained by recourse to "the yellow race's savagery." Rather, he had conclusively proven how "the 'civilized' world" was the sole culprit in instigating this violence. Finnish socialists were especially interested in Krishna's low opinion about European missionaries in Asia, since it reaffirmed their strong anti-clerical beliefs.[374]

Krishna's appeal to Finnish socialists in America was partly as a symbol for socialism's universalism – as a concrete demonstration of its power to transcend divisions of color and creed. One writer extolled that "He moved among us as living proof that the emancipatory message of the whole humankind – international socialism – has found its way even to India's darkest jungles and there instilled itself in so many hearts that it cannot be rooted out even with the most brutal violence." As the purportedly civilized countries of Europe and North America were sinking into reaction, Asian peoples, who had "slept for millennia," were now awakening. He noted that "These messages made us enthusiastic, gave us hope, strengthened our beliefs."[375] The Asia that Krishna conjured up for his Finnish audiences thus invited Finns to see their own past in his descriptions of India, Persia, China and Japan. Hence, as the socialist movement had recently uplifted the Finns from their slumber, socialism was now raising Asians to a higher level of development.

Indeed, the enthusiasm for Krishna was also associated with the Indian comrade's significance to Finns. Krishna himself remarked in his writings to Finnish socialists that he had specifically wanted to tour among Finns because he saw similarities between them and his own people. Both countries were under the dou-

373 "Piirteitä oloista ja elämästä Indiassa, Kiinassa, Japanissa ja Persiassa." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 2, No. 5–6, June 1908, p. 131.

374 J[ohn] V[älimäki]: "Kertomuksia Aasiasta." *Raivaaja*, 25.6.1908. See also Alanne 1908, pp. 166–170.

375 Alanne 1908, pp. 153–154.

ble oppression of capitalism and imperialism, Krishna emphasized, which is why he claimed to have an especial appreciation of Finnish affairs. He had even learned some rudimentary Finnish when traveling in Finland.[376] Krishna's Finnish interlocutors also shared in this subaltern solidarity. The journalist Severi Alanne, who had escaped tsarist authorities to the United States after the 1906 Sveaborg Rebellion,[377] remarked that "It is understandable that comrade Krishna 'lost' just among us Finns." While there had been linguistic problems, Krishna and his Finnish audiences had found common ground in their shared subaltern experiences:

> Until recently our people have been in a similar slumber as India's people today. In the eyes of the civilized world, [Finns] were also an insignificant slave people. Only when they have had the courage to stand up and fight for their rights has the world taken notice of them. Similar fates always attach peoples to each other. Moreover, we can see that anti-Asian sentiment, the bogeyman of the 'Yellow Peril,' has infected our American party comrades to such a degree that they have apparently been lukewarm towards Krishna on his tours.[378]

When Krishna visited the Hancock office of *Työmies* during his lecture tour, the staff were initially surprised by the unannounced appearance of a dark-skinned stranger, speaking broken-Finnish on their doorsteps. However, this "Hindu comrade" was soon warmly welcomed by the editorial staff. Krishna lectured to the staff about "the situation in his home country, on missionary workers, on British oppression in India, and on the rapid development of socialism in India and other Asian countries." He also humored his listeners by cursing the Finnish-American bour-

376 N. Krishna: "Toivotus suomalaisille tovereille." *Raivaaja*, 26.5.1908; N. Krishna: "Tervehdys suomalaisille tovereille." *Työmies*, 9.7.1908.

377 On Alanne's activism in Finland, see Heikkilä 1993, pp. 56–64. Alanne insisted that Finnish socialists should join their forces with the Russian socialists to work for a revolution in the whole Russian Empire.

378 Alanne 1908, p. 154.

geoisie in "an impeccable Häme dialect." Krishna felt a strong connection with Finland, a *Työmies* journalist noted, which was "perhaps because he is also a member of an oppressed people." The shared bond was also a moving experience for Krishna's Finnish comrades. The journalist noted that "We parted ways with warm shakes of hand. My innermost feelings were: 'Religion or fatherland can never build fraternity between peoples like a common ideology can!'"[379]

Krishna's lecture tour in America and its reception among Finnish socialists is interesting for what it says about Finnish socialists' understanding of world peoples and their own position in the world. They could see both the Finnish present and the Finnish past in Krishna's depictions of Asia. Like Asians, Finns were struggling against the twin evils of capitalism and imperialism; but unlike Asians, Finns had already left their slumber mostly behind them and were now awake and able to demand the realization of their rights. That the Finnish socialists could host such a lecture tour about how socialism was making headway among people just awakening was in itself a kind of confirmation of Finnish progress. The progressiveness of such an effort was amplified when contrasted with the chauvinistic ill will of Americans to Krishna and their irrational fear of the Yellow Peril. However, Finnish socialists were not as free of such fears as some perhaps thought. When Alanne, the socialist journalist, asked Krishna about the "curious phenomenon" of Asians migrating to the American West Coast, Krishna assured his interlocutor that such immigration would soon come to a halt as Asia developed and as the Japanese further colonized Korea and Manchuria.[380] Thus, Krishna did not condemn the anti-immigration sentiment

379 Iikka: "Ilmatietoja." *Työmies*, 2.7.1908. This article was also published a few weeks later in a socialist newspaper in Helsinki. See "Toveri Krishnasta." *Työmies* (Helsinki), 23.7.1908.

380 Alanne 1908, pp. 164–166. He condemned the anti-Asian race riots in the U.S. and Canada, but saw Britain as the ultimate culprit: to break the pro-India sympathies then developing in Canada, the British government had sent Indian ex-servicemen known for their brutality to Canada and thus incited anti-Indian sentiment.

outright, which at the time was intensifying within the U.S. Socialist Party. Instead, he sought to find middle ground between "utopian" internationalism and racial chauvinism. Here, too, the Indian lecturer shared much with his Finnish comrades.

2.3. Asian Exclusion as Pragmatism

The question of Asian immigration started to become increasingly politicized in the Socialist Party after 1907. The broader U.S. labor movement, from which socialism emerged, had been at the forefront of the movement for Asiatic exclusion for decades. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was preceded by the mobilization of a movement of white workers on the Pacific Coast, who accused the Asian "coolies" of lowering the standard of living of white workers. In its early years, the Socialist Party was less interested in the question of immigration than the American Federation of Labor (AFL). It shrugged off the issue as a bourgeois diversion from the real issue of class struggle. However, as anti-Japanese sentiment grew on the Pacific Coast after 1906 and climaxed in a national war scare in 1907,[381] socialist activists also started to voice their concerns about the "influx" of Asian immigrants from "backward races." Other socialists, many of whom were recent immigrants themselves, argued that restrictionism was incompatible with international working-class solidarity. They advocated that socialists should organize "backward" workers, rather than isolating them. [382]

The debate was at its most intense between 1907 and 1912. In August 1907, the U.S. socialists tried to convince the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart that the exclusion of Oriental labor was necessary in order to protect working-class interests and was therefore compatible with socialist internationalism. The Congress resolutely rejected this suggestion as being anti-social-

381 Hajimu 2009.

382 Kipnis 1952, pp. 276–288.

ist and instead endorsed a resolution that condemned all racial immigration restrictions as being detrimental to working-class solidarity. In the U.S., the debate still raged. Three loosely-defined factions emerged in this debate: exclusionists, such as Ernest Untermann and Victor Berger, who held a majority in the party's Committee on Immigration; anti-exclusionists, who supported the Stuttgart resolution and who held a minority in the Committee; and those who advocated the middle ground, represented by Morris Hillquit. He held that while racial exclusionism should be condemned, American workers still had the right to exclude immigrants on economic grounds – in practice, this was a way to exclude Asians without saying so explicitly.[383]

Most Finnish immigrant workers had no immediate experience of the so-called Oriental problem. The vast majority of Finnish immigrants settled east of the Mississippi. Consequently, most Finns only came into contact with Asians in laundries, restaurants and other individual businesses. There were, however, lively Finnish immigrant communities in California, the Pacific Northwest, and the mining regions of Wyoming and other western states, where encounters with Asians were more common. It has been acknowledged that Finnish workers benefited from Asian exclusion in Wyoming mines, for example, where they were among the European immigrant workers who replaced the Chinese after they had been violently driven out in the 1890s.[384] A Wyoming Finn, later reflecting on these events, erased the violence from the picture: Finns had taken the place of the Chinese because "the Chinese guy with his cup of rice" had proven to be too feeble to work in the coal mines. Finns were strong but docile

383 Hillquit himself conceded as much: since most Asian immigration to America was stimulated by capitalists, he noted, his resolution would bring it to an almost complete halt. See Ira Kipnis: *The American Socialist Movement, 1897–1912.* Columbia University Press: New York 1952, p. 284. On the debate more generally, see Kipnis 1952, pp. 276–288.

384 Ross 1977, p. 56; Kivisto 1984, pp. 88–89. In June 1885, for instance, Rock Springs, Wyoming, was the scene of one of the most notorious anti-Chinese pogroms. This location emerged as a popular destination for Finnish miners in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

and lacked class consciousness, which is why they had come to replace the Chinese.[385] Oskari Tokoi, who would later emerge as an important politician in the Finnish Social Democratic Party, visited Rock Springs in Wyoming in 1894. He was looking for mining jobs, but refused a job offer when it turned out the mine in question only had Chinese miners.[386] For many Finnish workers, the anti-Chinese atmosphere of Western coal mines taught important lessons about the position of Asians in the United States.

Finnish immigrants also participated in anti-Asian discrimination in more direct ways. Many historians of the Western and Pacific Northwest's labor and ethnic history have noted how organization against Asian immigrants at the time soon created a sense of supra-national white identity among the region's many European immigrant groups.[387] Finnish immigrants were very much a part of this white community. In Astoria, Oregon, a town that emerged in the 1870s as a major center of the salmon canning industry,[388] Finns lived alongside a fairly large Chinese community that was limited to working in domestic service and in menial cannery jobs. Finnish fishermen participated in upholding this racial segregation by prohibiting the Chinese from fishing on the Columbia River. The Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union, a fishermen's union established in 1879 and dominated by Finnish, Scandinavian and other European immigrants, listed the enforcement of Chinese exclusion as one of its main objectives.[389]

385 "Lyhyt silmäys Wyomingin suomalaisten pyrintöihin." In *Toveri kymmenvuotias 1907–1917*. Toveri Press: Astoria 1917, p. 67.

386 Oskari Tokoi: *Maanpakolaisen muistelmia.* Tammi: Lahti 1947. p. 62.

387 See, for example, Chris Friday: *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870–1942.* Temple University Press: Philadelphia 1995; Kornel Chang: *Pacific Connections: The Making of the Western U.S.-Canadian Borderlands.* University of California Press: Berkeley 2012.

388 Hummasti 1979.

389 Michael Passi: "Fishermen on Strike: Finnish Workers and Community Power in Astoria, Oregon 1880-1900." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila, Jr. (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great*

At times of racial strife, Finnish immigrants were not immune to bouts of violence. After riots against South Asian immigrants in Bellingham, Washington, in September 1907, for example, two South Asian workers attacked their Finnish foreman at a lumber mill in Aberdeen, Washington. The mill owner explained to the local police chief that "the white men had been aggravating the Hindus for some time and that there had been bad blood between them."[390] As Kornel Chang notes, race riots, calls for Asian exclusion and participation in organizations, such as the Asiatic Exclusion League, helped white workers on the U.S.-Canadian western borderlands to develop "a racial class consciousness that cut across national lines."[391] Many Finnish workers, who lived on both sides of the border, came to share in this cross-national white community and internalized the anti-Asian arguments. This was reflected in the discussion on the so-called Oriental question in the Finnish labor press in 1908 and thereafter. The most articulate defender of the anti-Asian position was the editor of *Työmies*, Toivo Hiltunen, who had lived in Astoria between 1903 and 1906, where he became acquainted with the "problem" of Asian labor.[392]

Replying to a reader's letter that was critical of Asian exclusion, Hiltunen denied that his exclusionist position was based on racial or religious hatred and explained the policy's economic underpinnings. Having lived in Astoria, he framed the problem in terms that were familiar from the West coast debates on the matter: Asians were an unorganizable lot that survived on little and could thus accept jobs, wages and working conditions that were unacceptable to white men. He noted that Midwestern Finns, who only met individual Asians at laundries, had no understanding of the severity of the situation in the West. Hiltunen contented that Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Indians were "stealing

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Lakes Region: New Perspectives. Institute of Migration: Turku 1975, p. 96; Kivisto 1984, pp. 88–90. On the racial order and the position of Chinese laborers in Astoria's salmon cannery industry, see Friday 1995, pp. 56–75.

390 Quoted in Chang 2012, p. 97.

391 Chang 2012, pp. 97–98.

392 Sulkanen 1951, p. 490.

jobs from the white-skinned" in the West. Moreover, he argued that if this was not quelled, "an unlimited flood of Asians" would soon inundate the Midwest, too, and would put Finnish miners out of work.[393] In its coverage of immigration, *Työmies* often depicted attempts to ease Asian immigration to the United States as being at odds with working-class interests.[394] The newspaper also did not shy away from racial slurs: in a story about a Chinese man who had sexually assaulted a Finnish woman in Superior, Wisconsin, the journalist referred to the man as a "slant-eye" (*vinosilmä*).[395]

Indeed, a thinly-veiled cultural and racial disdain for Asians lay behind the economist rationale for exclusion. In his article defending Asiatic exclusion, Hiltunen drew on this rhetoric of cultural and racial alienness: "Looking into a window of a 'laundry' some night, one can get an idea of the Chinese lifestyle. One can see a gang of thin ghosts sitting around a table, using a pair of forceps to eat grains of rice as small as a mosquito one at a time."[396] This observation of the slim, non-meat-eating Chinese was not only a comment on their ridiculous and unmanly ways of life, but also worked to highlight the economic threat they posed. By eschewing proper food and living arrangements, the Chinese led a life of asceticism that could be sustained with far lower wages than the life of white American workers. It was small wonder, then, that they were "stealing jobs from the white-skinned," as Hiltunen put it.[397]

This mix of economic and culturalist language was characteristic of the broader discourse of the U. S. labor and socialist movement regarding the Asian threat. The strains of economic and

393 T[oivo] H[iltunen]: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908.

394 See, for example, "Jaapanilaiset kieräilevät." *Työmies*, 16.1.1908; "Siirtolaisuus eri maista." *Raivaaja*, 11.6.1908; "Siirtolaisuutta vastustetaan." *Työmies*, 3.3.1910; "Aikovat estää siirtolaisuutta." *Työmies*, 17.3.1910; "Kongressi iskee unioita. Puolustaa aasialaisia työläisiä." *Työmies*, 10.5.1910.

395 "Kiinalainen 'puristellut' suomalaista tyttöä." *Työmies*, 26.2.1907.

396 T.H.: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908.

397 T[oivo] H[iltunen]: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908.

cultural argumentation were intimately intertwined. With their androgynous dresses and hairstyles, low-meat diet and improper gender relations, Asians were depicted as being wholly alien to white American working-class culture. This cultural otherness was then used to rationalize the economic argument of Asians as a labor threat. Asians were purportedly content with a much more meagre standard of living than white workers – no proper housing, no meat, no white man's regard for family life – and hence they were prepared to accept wages and working conditions that white workers would have rightly found degrading.[398]

Asian cultural differences were in this discourse deemed to be unbridgeable. Organization and cultural assimilation would do no good as Asians would not accept the white men's standard of living. Consequently, exclusion was the only suitable solution. Some fervent exclusionists, like Berger and Untermann, were not afraid to explicitly outline their racial motivations. At the 1908 Socialist Party convention, for example, Untermann declared: "This is not only an economic question, but also a race question, and I am not afraid to say so."[399] Drawing on broader nativist discourse, Untermann and Berger constantly conjured up imagery that played on race suicide, thereby provoking a sense of anxiety about the replacement of the white race by inferior non-white races.[400] The immigration question was frequently conflated with the domestic race question, and the Yellow Peril was coupled with the issue of black Americans. Victor Berger pontificated in the

398 See, for example, American Federation of Labor: *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice. American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism. Which Shall Survive?* Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C.: 1902.

399 Untermann in John M. Work (ed.): *Proceedings, National Convention of the Socialist Party, Held at Chicago, Illinois, on May 10 to 19, 1908.* The Socialist Party: Chicago 1908, p. 110–111.

400 On anxieties regarding racial replacement in the United States in the early 1900s, see Bender 2009, pp. 81–84. On the discourse surrounding race suicide, see Gail Bederman: *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917.* The University of Chicago Press: Chicago 1995.

following manner about this topic: "We have one race question here now, the negro question. … If we admit Asiatic labor without restriction, this country is absolutely sure to become a black-and-yellow country within a few generations."[401]

Some Finnish socialists also drew on this rhetoric of race suicide and anxieties over racial replacement in their discussion of the immigration question. Taavi Tainio, for example, a Finnish journalist and former Social Democratic MP, remarked: "Who knows how race will develop in this 'world's greatest insane asylum when there are so many elements, taking account of also the Indians, negroes, and Asia's yellows. Some are now afraid of racial degeneration. The future will show if such an extensive and uncontrollable crossbreeding is beneficial for the race."[402] Others were more certain that Asian racial influence on American racial composition was detrimental. Referring to "socialist authorities," the author and playwright Moses Hahl argued that the Yellow Peril was all too real and that full racial confrontation between the white and the yellow races was on the cards.[403]

Most U.S. socialists, who were in principle wedded to the notion of internationalism, eschewed making such explicitly racist utterances and sought to accommodate their disdain for Asians with some semblance of universalism. They did not deny the basic socialist tenet that all people had the potential to develop, but projected the realization of this potential among Asians into an undefined, distant future. The implications were much the same as with the more explicitly racist commentaries: Asians needed to be kept out. Cameron H. King, for example, remarked: "Our feelings of brotherhood toward the Japanese must wait until we have no longer reason to look upon them as an inflowing horde

401 Quoted in Foner 1977, p. 146. Ellipses by Foner.

402 T[aavi] Tainio: "Vanhan maan miehen mietelmiä ja havainnoita." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 9, No. 11–12, November 1915, p. 497.

403 Moses Hahl: "Pienten kansojen tulevaisuus." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 9, No. 11–12, November 1915, pp. 523–527.

of alien scabs."[404] King did not rule out the possibility of Japanese development, but his contemptuous vocabulary betrayed how far off this seemed to him. This cultural pessimism dressed as pragmatism was more popular among Finnish-American socialists than the explicit biological racialism of Untermann or Hahl. Toivo Hiltunen, for instance, argued that it was impossible to get Asians to give up their life of low living standards "with any kind of agitation at least during one generation." Thus, he did not deny outright the potential of Asians to develop, but regarded such a potential as being slight at the time.

Hiltunen regurgitated a common argument of exclusionist socialists, who argued that exclusionism would also serve the interests of the excluded in a roundabout way: if Asians were discouraged to leave their homeland, they would be able to develop socialism in a social and cultural environment suitable to them, and at a pace that fitted their distinct characteristics. He held that "The Asian races must develop forward in their own country and the white-skinned workers everywhere must help in that development."[405] As clumsy as these attempts to wed exclusionism with internationalism were, they illustrate that Finnish proponents of immigration restriction did not regard their position as a departure from internationalist socialism. For them, socialism equaled the pragmatic advancement of workers' interests and Asian exclusion was dressed up as being merely a pragmatic measure. That such an imaginative leap was possible illustrates the power of evolutionary thinking on Finnish socialist minds.

At the 1910 convention, the Finnish Socialist Federation was the only language federation that supported the exclusion of Asian laborers. When the language federation representatives met before the convention to discuss areas of common interest, the immigration issue was the only one that divided the immi-

404 Cameron H. King, Jr.: "Asiatic Exclusion." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 8, No. 11, May 1908, p. 669.

405 T[oivo] H[iltunen].: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908. For similar arguments in the broader Socialist debate, see Miller, Slayton, and Tuttle in Work 1908, pp. 106–107, 112, 117.

grant delegates. Other language federations, especially the Polish and Jewish factions, were fervently against Asian exclusion and wanted the language federations to express their support for the Stuttgart resolution that opposed all racial restrictions on immigration. The Finnish federation was the only one to oppose this stance; they wanted the language federations to support whatever stand the convention would take.[406] On the convention floor, the representative of the Finnish federation, John Välimäki, came out in support of the exclusion of Asian laborers on economic grounds. Whereas representatives of the Polish, Jewish and Scandinavian federations scathingly criticized the exclusionist resolution,[407] the Finnish federation defended the exclusion of Asians. Välimäki remarked that "The Finnish organization is not willing to go on record as favoring the exclusion of the Japanese and Chinese and Hindoos as races, but we do want to go on record as opposing mass immigration from those countries." He also acknowledged that European immigrants had been used to advance capitalist interests, but advocated only Asian exclusion. Välimäki's speech provides a good illustration of how economic arguments for Asiatic exclusion were built on a racial logic.[408]

It should be noted that Välimäki was not a right-winger. He was identified with the radical wing of the Finnish federation and under his editorship of *Työmies,* between 1908 and 1911, he steered the paper to the left.[409] This illustrates that positions on immigration in the Finnish Socialist Federation did not follow

406 "Sosialistipuolueen kongressista. Vieraskielisten järjestöjen neuvottelukokous pidetty." *Työmies*, 17.5.1910.

407 Holm in *Proceedings of the National Congress of the Socialist Party, Held at Chicago, Illinois May 15 to 21 1910*. The Socialist Party: Chicago 1910, pp. 138–139; Klawier in *Proceedings*, pp. 152–154.

408 Valimaki in *Proceedings* 1910, pp. 146–147; "Sosialistipuolueen kongressista. Aasialaisten maastasulkemiskysymys ratkaistu." *Työmies*, 21.5.1910. The *Työmies* correspondent noted that all six Finnish convention delegates supported Välimäki's "middle road between the two extremes." There were, however, differences in the Finnish delegates' approaches as will be discussed below.

409 Sulkanen 1951, pp. 314–315.

simple left-center-right divisions. Not all "right wingers" were outright exclusionists, while not all "left wingers" advocated an Open Door policy. This reflected the more general situation in the party. While some historians have painted the immigration issue as a simple confrontation between the righteous left and the chauvinistic right wing of the party,[410] the actual contours of the debate were more complex. The radical left was far from unified on the question: while most criticisms of restrictionism came from the party's left, many prominent left-wing voices, like Jack London, and ultra-leftist radicals in the Pacific Northwest were ardent supporters of Asiatic exclusion.[411] As Pittenger notes, the left-wingers shared with the right an understanding of societal development as evolution: some races were more developed than others.[412]

As Välimäki's comment at the convention testifies, many Finnish radicals also shared these reservations about the potential of Asians to evolve. It is telling that the more radical *Työmies* was usually more explicit in its support of Asiatic exclusion than the more moderate *Raivaaja*.[413] When opposition to Asians was connected to the everyday interests of regular workingmen, and anti-exclusionism was linked to an emasculated form of intellectual detachment, it was easy for many left-wingers to frame Asiatic exclusion as a radical, manly position. The support of some radicals for Asiatic exclusion can also be explained by their willingness to associate the FSF as closely as possible with the SPA and distance the federation from parochial forms of national insularity. It is ironic that these efforts to eschew nationalist isolationism

410 Kipnis 1952, pp. 276–288.

411 Pittenger 1993, p. 174, 210–211; Ross 2015, p. 63.

412 Pittenger 1993, p. 174.

413 One can compare, for instance, the papers' coverage of the 1908 convention. Whereas the *Työmies* correspondent explicitly criticized the anti-exclusionist position as utopian and framed the exclusionist position as mere pragmatism, the *Raivaaja* merely reproduced the competing resolutions and reserved from commenting on them.

brought them on side with the ardently nationalist wing of the SPA.

The defense of exclusionism-as-pragmatism by Finnish socialist leaders happened at a time when the image of Finns among U.S. socialists was undergoing a rapid shift. The 1907 strike on Minnesota's Iron Range and the successful organization of the Finnish Socialist Federation from 1906 had dispelled many of the suspicions harbored by U.S. socialists about Finns as a "scab race." The Finnish Socialist Federation had rapidly emerged as the largest language federation within the party and the Finnish example was touted as a model for other immigrant radicals. Even Robert Hunter – a chief exclusionist in the party and someone who was prone to gloomy predictions of race suicide by immigration – characterized the Finns as one the world's most progressive peoples.[414] Indeed, by 1910, Finns had become a kind of model minority within the Socialist Party. The English-language party press gave sympathetic coverage of the efforts to establish Finnish-language locals and praised their disciplined, highly sophisticated organizational structure. The *Chicago Daily Socialist* reported in May 1910 that the socialist movement among Finns in the U.S. was "not the same trembling, weak organization that it was a short time ago," but was now a growing and tightly-disciplined organization where the "spirit of 'Workers of the World, Unite!'" had won out over petty forms of national insularism.[415]

The image of Finns was further elevated by the active international engagement of the Social Democratic Party in Finland (SDP). After 1908, the Russian government had increased its efforts to integrate Finland with the rest of the realm. The political liberties, which had been granted by the tsar following political turmoil in 1905, were increasingly rolled back. The Finnish parliament (*eduskunta*), in particular, faced growing pressures to conform to tsarist overrule. When it was created in 1906, the par-

414 Miller 2003, pp. 291–292; Ross 2015, p. 120. On Robert Hunter's views on Finns, see "'Maailman rohkeimmat ja kehittyneimmät työläiset.'" *Työmies*, 14.12.1909.

415 "Finns Have A Plan For Socialist Work." *Chicago Daily Socialist*, 11.5.1910.

liament had been among the most democratic in the world, but after 1907 it was constantly disbanded by the tsarist authorities. In the elections of 1906, the SDP had become Finland's largest party in the parliament and it also assumed an important role in the political struggle to defend Finland's autonomy. International lobbying was part of these efforts. Finnish Social Democrats appealed to Swedish, Russian, German and other European socialists to publicize Finland's cause in their newspapers. Finland's cause was also brought up at the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen in the fall of 1910. The resolution on Finland adopted at the conference condemned the suppression of democratic rights in Finland and the "system of savage oppression of all nationalities" in Russia in general. It lauded the Finnish and Russian proletariats for their common struggle together against the tsarist "tyranny," and appealed to socialist and "sincere democrats of the entire world" to organize protests against Russian incursions.[416]

A key rhetorical device of the Finnish Social Democrats was to cast their struggle for autonomy in civilizational terms. They frequently appealed to "the civilized world" to condemn the savagery of Russian oppression, depicting the political strife in Finland as one between a civilized and modern nation (Finland) and a backward and brutal empire (Russia).[417] This framing was affirmed by Marxist reasoning about Finland's industrial development vis-à-vis Russian backwardness.[418]

This international activism of Finnish Social Democrats had its effect also across the Atlantic. In 1910, the U.S. socialist press devoted much coverage to the Finnish cause. The coverage reproduced the civilizational rhetoric of the Finnish Social Democrats and pitted the Finns as an industrializing nation whose electorate were of a socialist bent, against the reactionary behemoth that was the Romanov Empire. Indeed, when the tsar threatened to dissolve the Finnish parliament in 1910, some U.S. socialist writ-

416 International Socialist Congress: *International Socialist Congress*. H. G. Adair: Chicago 1910, pp. 8–9. See also Heikkilä 1993, pp. 171–174.

417 Heikkilä 1993, pp. 169–174, 191.

418 Heikkilä 1993, pp. 48–49.

ers saw an interesting silver-lining in this oppression. The editors of the *Chicago Daily Socialist* noted that while the dissolution of parliament might spell the death of the Finnish nation, the crackdown also meant a new influx of progressive immigrants to the United States: "The crushing of the Finnish nation will mean a few thousand more Finnish Socialists in America, and we need them."[419] In extolling the virtues of Finns, the editors also noted that Finnish immigrant revolutionaries "may help us to progress as far as Finland has gone"[420] and help "to rouse American workingmen."[421]

This rapid change in the image of socialist Finns – from a scab race to paragons of progress – illustrates just how differently U.S. socialists viewed European and Asian immigrants. While both were often held in contempt for their uncouth and alien ways, only the latter were deemed uncouth aliens in perpetuity. Indeed, Sally Miller's insistence that Socialist Party nativists wanted to exclude *all* new European and Asian immigrants does not hold up.[422] It is clear that the party's nativists were far more discerning: their exclusivist visions targeted Asians and almost never Europeans. Even the most ardent exclusionists, like Untermann and Berger, insisted that they did not wish to extend exclusion to any European immigrants. European and Asian immigrants threatened to lower American standards of living in the short term, but only the latter were deemed an existential threat to the

419 "Finis Finlandiae." *Chicago Daily Socialist*, 13.6.1910.

420 "The Death of a Nation." *Chicago Daily Socialist*, 11.5.1910.

421 On the *Chicago Daily Socialist*'s coverage of Finland during the parliamentary crisis of 1910, see also "International Manifesto on Finland." *CDS*, 19.5.1910; "Protests Against Russia's Attitude Toward Finland." *CDS*, 20.5.1910; "Finland is Dead. Long Live Finland." *CDS*, 25.5.1910; "Crucifying Finland." *CDS*, 24.6.1910; "A Word for Finland." *CDS*, 26.6.1910; "The Murder of a Nation." *CDS*, 30.6.1910.

422 Miller 2003, pp. 290–296. According to Miller, the Socialist Party exclusionists, "with their focus on Asian immigrants did not conceal their general opposition to newer immigrant workers as unorganizable and undesirable. All recent immigrants knew that they were also the objects of exclusionary sentiment." (p. 296)

nation. European immigrants, for Berger, were "of our own race and make-up," had "the same civilization" and would thus "become part of us, […] the same as we are." On the other hand, "[T]he Asiatic question" was "entirely different." He held that as they were separate in terms of race and civilization, Asians could never assimilate with Americans.[423] The party's Immigration Commission made this distinction clear in its reports, which were compiled by the exclusionist majority: "Just as empathetically as we insist on the exclusion of [the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Hindus], so we on the other hand insist that our position shall not be construed as applicable to those immigrants of other races and nations who have behind them a long history of faithful service in the struggle of the working class, and which contain most valuable revolutionary elements, much needed here in our common conflict with the exploiting classes."[424] The report invoked Jews as an example of a valuable immigrant race, but Finns, too, were clearly on the safe side of this division.

For many Finnish socialists, the line of division between immigrants who were assimilable and unassimilable was not always clear. This helps to explain their preoccupation with proving their capability to adapt. The Finnish socialist leadership and the press were afraid that even a slight deviation from the party line might threaten their image in the eyes of the American labor movement. Any association with Asian "scab races" might raise unwanted eyebrows. One socialist writer contended that it was "A fact […] that the American working population is well organized […] and they naturally frown upon those foreign workers who are unable to organize. This is what explains the hostility towards

423 Victor Berger in Work 1908, p. 111. See also Wanhope in *Proceedings* 1910, p. 149.

424 *Proceedings* 1910, p. 77. The resolution proposal was also reproduced in Finnish-American socialist papers. See "Sosialistipuolueen edustajakokous Chicagossa." *Raivaaja*, 21.5.1910; "Sosialistipuolueen kongressista. Aasialaisten maastasulkemiskysymys ratkaistu." *Työmies*, 21.5.1910. See also "Exclude Japs, Hindus, Chinese, Koreans, Says Big Socialist Report." *Chicago Daily Socialist*, 17.5.1910; Joshua Wanhope: "Asiatic Immigration: How About It?" *The Masses*, June 1912 p. 12.

the Japanese, the Chinese, and all other nationalities and races that are unable to organize."[425] Finns had been in a similar position in some localities, where they had contributed to wages being pulled down and to breaking strikes. While the image of Finns had improved, anxieties remained. Many Finns continued to toil as unskilled, migratory and low-wage workers, inviting comparisons to Asian coolies. In the West, the socialist author and activist A. B. Mäkelä noted in 1911 that Finnish workers entered hazardous mines, which were eschewed by white American miners and where their only co-workers were Chinese. Small wonder, then, that Finns in the West were "considered almost the same as the Japanese and only slightly higher than the Chinese."[426]

This wariness regarding the label of a "scab race" largely explains why many Finnish socialist activists and journalists were behind the exclusionist position when the question emerged as a major topic of contention in the Socialist Party in 1907. When discussion on immigration started to increasingly target the "backward" European peoples, many within the Finnish-American socialist movement regarded these measures as practical. While *Työmies* was skeptical as to the efficiency of the illiteracy clause in restrictionist legislation, and hesitant about whether American fears of immigration were at all justified, it still maintained that American workers had the right to decide "what kinds of elements it lets into the great 'melting pot' of nationalities."[427] Finnish socialists sought to do their utmost to integrate with the broader American labor movement. Hence, unconditional support for exclusionism was deemed a part of this integrational process.

The proponents of Asiatic exclusion in the U.S. party, such as Victor Berger and Ernest Untermann, framed the immigration question as a debate between realists and utopians. One's position on the question was a tell-tale sign of how familiar one was with

425 "Ettekö todellakaan häpeä?" *Työmies*, 3.2.1908.

426 A. B. Mäkelä: "Orjan kuoria." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 5, No. 3, March 1911, p. 97.

427 "Työläiset ja siirtolaisuus." *Työmies*, 5.2.1915.

the realities of American workers: to support exclusion was to understand America; to oppose this stance was to embarrassingly reveal one's utter unfamiliarity with the American labor force. The exclusionists argued the opposition of European socialists at the International Socialist Congress provided further proof that immigrant restrictions were not understood by those outside the U.S. Europeans, unlike Americans, Australians and South Africans, had no first-hand experience of Asian workers and thus simply did not know what they were talking about. Internationalism was deemed a bourgeois ideal that was only suitable for utopian sentimentalists. A true, bread-and-butter working-class movement, which struggled to secure the immediate interests of workers, could ill afford such Pollyannaish frivolity.[428]

Cameron H. King Jr. opined that for American workingmen "to welcome the intense competition of Asiatic immigration with its low standard of living is to immolate themselves on the altar of international ideals and leave their wives and children go more hungry and ragged than ever." He added that "The reply of the workingmen to such a proposition is plain and empathic. Unanimously in every organization the workingmen of America have declared for the exclusion of Asiatic labor."[429] Ernest Untermann ridiculed the internationalist position as a concoction of "European intellectuals who have never had any actual touch with the race issue."[430] The implication was clear: any socialist within the American party who questioned the exclusionist line was still under the spell of Old World sentimentalities and was oblivious to the realities of American workers. In a telling choice of words, King referred to anti-exclusionists as "those socialist residents of the United States who import their opinions ready made in Eu-

428 Ernest Untermann in Work 1908, p. 109–110.

429 Cameron H. King, Jr.: "Asiatic Exclusion." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 8, No. 11, May 1908, p. 662. See also Morris Hillquit: "Immigration in the United States." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, August 1907, pp. 65–75; Waynick in *Proceedings* 1910, pp. 147–148.

430 Ernest Untermann in Work 1908, p. 110. See also Untermann in *Proceedings* 1910, p. 83.

rope and are incapable of applying the fundamental principles of Socialism to the local facts[.]"[431] Opponents of exclusion were *in* America, but not *of* America. To be a true socialist American was to support Asiatic exclusion.

As with other European immigrant socialists,[432] the question of Asian immigration for Finns became yet another litmus test in terms of their fitness to be class-conscious American workers. Many in the leadership of the Finnish Socialist Federation and press felt that the wisest course was to tread a careful middle road, as it had on many other issues. In the Socialist Party debates, between the pragmatists and so-called impossibilists, Midwestern socialist leaders were mostly associated with the pragmatists and saw the conventions as confrontations between these two tendencies.[433] On the issue of immigration, this meant the alignment of Finns with Morris Hillquit's middle position. This eschewed racial chauvinism, but advocated for the exclusion of Asian immigrants based on their purported backwardness.[434] The Finnish-language labor press could be skeptical about the Japanese war scare and about the demographic threat presented by Asian immigration.[435] However, since exclusionism was something that the American labor movement supported, it was also necessary for the Finnish Socialist Federation to align itself with this position. Compari-

431 King 1908, p. 668. See Wanhope 1912, p. 12. Wanhope argued that the immigration question was "peculiarly an American question" and the opinions of European thinkers were "not decisive." Thus, the question needed to be "settled by American Socialists and with particular reference to American conditions."

432 It bears emphasizing that many of the chief proponents of Asiatic exclusion, like Victor Berger, Ernest Untermann, and Morris Hillquit, were themselves foreign-born.

433 T[oivo] H[iltunen]: "Sosialistipuolueen kansalliskonventsioni." *Työmies*, 5.5.1908; Syrjälä [1910], pp. 85–91. See Ollila 1975, p. 35.

434 Hillquit 1907. Hillquit's article on immigration was also published in *Työmies*. See Morris Hillquit: "Siirtolaisuus Yhdysvaltoihin." *Työmies*, 20.8.1907; 22.8.1907.

435 "Japanilaiskysymys." *Raivaaja*, 18.2.1909; "Toisenvärinen vaara." *Raivaaja*, 9.3.1911.

sons between nations and work places also made exclusion seem like a commonsensical policy: just like workers of a specific work site had the right to prevent strikebreakers coming in during industrial action, the working class of specific nations had the right to exclude foreign labor during times of economic hardship.[436]

The socialist leadership and newspapers considered this a pragmatic position that needed little explicit elaboration—it was a sound middle-road policy that rejected both the un-socialistic racialism of the exclusionists and the utopian internationalism of the anti-exclusionists.[437] This position was only defended when directly challenged.

2.4. All Men are Equal, except Chinamen?

While the leadership of the Finnish Socialist Federation and the newspapers were largely supportive of Asiatic exclusion, or were at least indifferent towards it, the federation also contained critics of the Socialist Party's nativism. These voices were relatively muted in discussions prior to the conventions of 1908 and 1910, but by 1912 they had become more prominent. The official stance taken by the Finnish Socialist Federation on the issue also changed at the 1912 convention. Whereas the FSF had lent its support to the exclusion of Asians at the 1908 and 1910 conventions, its representative at the 1912 meeting took a strong position against Asian exclusion on any – racial or economic – grounds. This shift was reflective of broader changes within the Finnish Socialist Federation. The organization had become increasingly split between self-described pragmatists and radicals. The latter were increasingly critical of "pragmatism" as a euphemism for reactio-

436 V.P.: "Järjestynyt työväki ja siirtolaisuus." *Raivaaja*, 13.6.1911.

437 "Sosialistipuolueen edustajakokous Chicagossa." *Raivaaja*, 21.5.1910; "Ollut puoluekokouksemme." *Raivaaja*, 28.5.1910; "Sosialistipuolueen kongressista. Aasialaisten maastasulkemiskysymys ratkaistu." *Työmies*, 21.5.1910.

nary politics, and the defense of Asian exclusion as pragmatism became a target for these radicals.

The Finnish criticisms of the exclusionism of U.S. socialists emerged within the broader context of the international socialist movement. The International Socialist Congresses of 1904 and 1907 had scathingly criticized their American comrades for their reactionary and chauvinist positions on immigration. At the 1907 Congress in Stuttgart, the American attempts to justify their opposition to purportedly backward immigration were dealt a final blow. The head of the U.S. delegation, Morris Hillquit, defended the exclusion of Asian immigrants by noting their incompatibility with the modern industrial economy. Hillquit assured the delegates that "None of us are prejudiced against the Chinese;" the problem was that Asians were "altogether unorganizable."[438] The Congress, aside from the Australian and South African delegations that supported the Americans, did not buy Hillquit's economic arguments. Delegates considered them to be a fig leaf that superficially hid blunt racial prejudice. A Japanese delegate voiced strong opposition to Hillquit's remarks and proposed a resolution to vote it down as being inherently un-socialist and anti-internationalist. The Congress approved this resolution. After the conference, the Russian delegate Vladimir Lenin, censured the U.S. socialists for their attempt to "defend narrow, craft interests, to ban the immigration of workers from backward countries (coolies – from China, etc.)." The Bolshevik leader lamented that U.S. socialists were more interested in preserving privileges than in organizing internationally. Lenin argued that this parochialism was a prime example of the labor aristocratism that was so prevalent "among workers in some of the 'civilised' countries."[439] After Stuttgart, it was clear that Asian exclusion enjoyed little support among the world's socialists.

438 Pittenger 1993, p. 175; Miller 2003, p. 295; See also A.M. Simons "The Stuttgart Congress." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, September 1907, pp. 139–141.

439 V. I. Lenin: "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart" *Proletary*, No. 17, October 20, 1907.

For many of its members, the Socialist Party was the U.S. branch of an international movement, which is why the criticism from the International Socialist Congress was hard to shrug off. All socialists understood that their membership in a local workers' association connected them with a movement that did not stop at the borders of the United States and whose membership was not limited to the residents of that country alone. They considered themselves to be a part of a movement that transcended national boundaries. A veteran of the Finnish-American labor movement later reminisced in the following manner: "When people knew that they through their association were joining the chain of associations of the broad national and international labor movement and when they saw that organized workers were fighting victorious battles all across the world, involving millions of workers, there happened a complete upheaval in the minds of those who had joined America's Finnish labor movement."[440] For some, the obligations inherent in this international fellowship were far more important than loyalty to the national party. This internationalist consciousness was often more salient with radical immigrants who maintained close connections abroad. It was hardly surprising that many of the harshest critics of Asian exclusion within the Socialist Party were recent Jewish, Polish, Scandinavian and other immigrants.[441] To be sure, there were also influential native-born opponents of Asian exclusion among the leadership of the party. The party leader, Eugene V. Debs, did not attend the party conventions when the issue was debated, but condemned the exclusionist position as "utterly unsocialistic, reactionary and in truth outrageous" in a letter that was published in the socialist press.[442]

440 Frans J. Syrjälä quoted in Sulkanen 1951, p. 123.

441 See Knopfnagel and Berlyn in Work 1908, pp. 114–116; Holm and Klawier in *Proceedings* 1910, pp. 138–139, 152–154.

442 Eugene V. Debs: "A Letter on Immigration." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, July 1910, pp. 16–17; Eugene V. Debs: "Debs siirtolaisuuskysymyksestä." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 1910, pp. 233–235.

That the U.S. Socialist Party had so brazenly defied the opinion of the world's workers did not sit well with all Finnish-American socialists either. While the FSF leadership and the press were adamant about the need for socialist Finns to assimilate primarily with the U.S. labor movement, many members of the workers' associations took seriously the internationalist obligations inherent in their party membership.[443] John Fallström, a Michigan miner and a socialist activist, expressed this sentiment in a letter to *Työmies* in January 1908: "I, for one, understand the social question to be as large as the whole world is, with its arts and sciences, and it cannot be resolved with […] restrictions, not in America or elsewhere, but with the consciousness and opinions of all the peoples of our planet. And since the bourgeoisie controls [the Asians] like they control us – by being international – the labor movement also needs to be international if it desires to win something."[444] Fallström was severely critical of the Socialist Party that had set itself against the Stuttgart resolution on immigration and continued to find legitimate reasons to exclude Asian immigration. Fallström believed that anti-Asian agitation was a wholly bourgeois ploy to protect the capitalist class's interests in competition against Asian and European capitalists. That the U.S. labor and socialist movements had gone along with this chauvinistic incitation was a tell-tale sign of how deep the racial and religious prejudices remained in the United States amidst even the most purportedly enlightened Americans. He lamented that both bourgeois and socialist Americans still thought that "Asia is for Asians and America for Americans. We own this half of the globe and all the Asians need to be chased out. There's liberty, fraternity, and equality for you!"[445]

443 On the celebration of the internationalism of the Stuttgart conference, see, for example, "Sosialisti- ja työväenliikkeen edistys." *Köyhälistön Nuija II 1908.* Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiön Kirjapaino: Hancock 1908, pp. 16–17.

444 J[ohn] Fallström: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 23.1.1908.

445 J[ohn] Fallström: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 18.1.1908.

At the 1908 and 1910 Socialist Party conventions, Minnesota's Finnish delegate, Esther Nieminen,[446] was among the fiercest critics of Asian exclusion. At the 1908 convention she castigated U.S. socialists for "starving" and "underselling the Orientals," who were first driven out of jobs in Asia by American capitalists and then prohibited from migrating to the United States with the connivance of socialists. This hypocrisy made a mockery of socialists' internationalist commitments: "And then we say all men are equal, of whatever color. Soon we will be saying all men are equal but Chinamen. I don't know where the women come in – I mean the Chinese women." Anti-Asian incitation also diminished socialism's prospects in America since it deprived the socialist movement of many potential immigrant worker-recruits. Indeed, instead of quelling Asian immigration, Nieminen argued that socialists should encourage it: "The more we get here the better."[447]

She continued to voice strong opposition to the report of the exclusivist majority at the 1910 convention: "Being a Finlander, I presume you ought to expect that I shall stand on the side of the Japanese because we are said to be Mongolians, and so I shall stand for them."[448] She criticized the notion that problems with strikebreaking or low wages could be resolved by targeting a specific race, as if Asians alone had a monopoly on strikebreaking. Exclusion of one race would in no way stop capitalists from recruiting strikebreakers from other races, as the 1907 strike on Minnesota's Iron Range had proven. She reminded her audience that the mining company had recruited South Slavic, not Asian laborers, to break the strike. She held that "It is utterly impossible for an international country like the United States to try to exclude any race. We can't do it. If we keep on trying to exclude one race after the other we shall finally be left with the absurdity of trying to exclude each other." She quipped that even the arch-ex-

446 At the 1910 convention her last name was recorded as Laukki, as she had married Leo Laukki.

447 Work 1908, p. 115.

448 Esther Laukki in *Proceedings* 1910, pp. 140–141.

clusionist Berger might find his fellow Germans under threat of expulsion in the future. At its core, however, the question was based on principle: socialists should struggle for the good of all workers, not just a privileged subsection. As Nieminen noted: "I think that, no matter how we may try to gain some benefit for ourselves, the main objective should always be to get some benefit for all workers." According to her, socialists should struggle to prevent capitalists from importing strikebreakers and contract labor, but this was better achieved through international workers' co-operation than through "any foolish attempt to exclude a race from America."[449]

Nieminen attended the 1910 convention with her new husband, Leo Laukki, who was also a delegate for Minnesota. Leo had only lived in the U.S. for a little over two years, but had already been entrusted with the task of representing Minnesotan socialists in Chicago. This reflected his rapid elevation to the top echelons of Finnish-American radicalism. Born Leonard Lindqvist into a poor working-class family in Helsinki, as a young man he had enrolled in the Russian Cavalry. In the imperial army, he participated in the suppression of peasant revolts, which he later mentioned as a radicalizing experience. After his return to Finland in 1905, he took part in the political tumult of Finland's Great Strike. He helped to organize protests in the bourgeois revolutionary *Voimaliitto* ("Power League") and agitated among Russian soldiers. In the course of these revolutionary activities he became an ardent socialist. He was involved in the abortive Sveaborg Rebellion in the summer of 1906 and soon thereafter fled to the United States to escape the attentions of the tsarist authorities. In the U.S., Laukki worked as a journalist and as a teacher at the Work Peoples College in Minnesota. From early on he was seen as one of the leading lights of the emerging radical wing of the FSF. At the FSF's 1909 convention, he emerged as the chief proponent of industrial unionism. He even flirted with the use of sabotage as a revolutionary method in an ensuing debate that was waged in a newspaper. This radicalism earned Laukki many

449 Esther Laukki in *Proceedings* 1910, pp. 140–141.

enemies in the FSF's more moderate faction, grouped around the eastern *Raivaaja*, but endeared him to the more radical Midwestern rank and file. The radical faction was in the ascendancy in the federation until 1913, even controlling the executive committee at times.[450]

Consequently, Laukki was able to rise to important positions within the federation, which included being its official representative at the 1912 SPA convention. A much-liked teacher, productive writer and engaging speaker, he quickly achieved enormous intellectual influence among Finnish-American socialists.[451] In a 1914 speech, Martin Hendrickson lavished praised on him: "More than any other Finn, Laukki has opened our previously blinded eyes to see the working-class cause and to deepen our understanding of every aspect of the exploitative capitalist system."[452]

Laukki was a fierce critic of the purported insularity of Finnish socialists and felt that they should be more proactive in their relationship towards the party. At the Finnish Federation's 1909 convention, he demanded that the federation better prepare itself for Socialist Party conventions and that every FSF local should send representatives to the meetings of the party at city, county and state level.[453] He was a strong proponent of industrial unionism and a fierce critic of the old craft unions. Moreover, like many other Midwestern Finnish radicals, he was frustrated with the FSF's hesitancy on this issue. In the early 1910s he started to drift towards the more uncompromising radicalism of the IWW.[454]

The IWW was critical of the Socialist Party and the older craft unions over many issues, including the question of immigration. It considered the labor movement's refusal to organize Asian

450 Sulkanen 1951, pp. 178–179.

451 Tero Ahola: *Leo Laukki Amerikan suomalaisessa työväenliikkeessä.* Master's Thesis at the Department of Political History. University of Helsinki: Helsinki 1973; Ollila 1975, pp. 37–39.

452 Quoted in Ahola 1973, p. 74.

453 Syrjälä [1910], pp. 76–77, 80–85.

454 Ahola 1973, pp. 39–44, 50–56; Ollila 1975, pp. 36–41.

workers as tantamount to a betrayal of the working-class cause and was one of few unions that sought to reach out to Chinese, Japanese and other Asian workers. Melvyn Dubofsky notes that "Unlike the AFL (or for that matter all other American labor organizations), the IWW opposed exclusion laws and actively sought Asian recruits."[455] Racial exclusionism was an important aspect of the IWW's criticism of old craft unions: by prohibiting Asians, blacks and Mexicans from joining unions, the AFL bosses splintered the working class and thus abetted the companies they were purportedly struggling against. In places like Fresno, the IWW made significant strides in organizing Asian fruit and vegetable workers. Its activists, like the *Industrial Worker* editor and labor organizer, J.H. Walsh, made principled appeals to the humanity of Asian workers and their capability as unionists.[456] Finnish socialist radicals, like Laukki, who engaged with the IWW and the Socialist Party's industrial unionists, drew on these criticisms when they grappled with the restrictionist sympathies within the SPA and the FSF.

At the 1910 SPA convention, Laukki, like his wife Esther, already identified strongly with the anti-exclusionist cause. The *International Socialist Review* lauded Esther and Leo Laukki as "strong upholders of the Open Door policy to workers of the whole world."[457] Leo Laukki was elected to represent the anti-exclusionist position in the party's Committee on Immigration. Leo Laukki was voted onto the Committee with 31 votes, the highest figure for an anti-exclusionist (only the exclusionist

455 Melvyn Dubofsky: *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World.* Quadrangle/The New York Times book Co.: New York [1973], p. 127. See also Philip S. Foner: *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905–1917*. International Publishers: New York 1973, pp. 123–124; Daniel Rosenberg: "The IWW and Organization of Asian Workers in Early 20th Century America." *Labor History*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1995, pp. 77–87.

456 Rosenberg 1995, pp. 79–81.

457 "Convention Notes." *International Socialist Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, July 1910, p. 45.

standard-bearers Untermann and Berger received more votes.)[458] True to his mandate, Laukki argued in favor of a non-restrictive immigration policy in the committee. Yet, since the exclusionists were in the majority, the majority report prepared for the 1912 convention again called for Asiatic exclusion – this time with even more explicitly racial language. The minority, comprised of Laukki, Spargo and Meyer London, simply asked for the convention to endorse the Stuttgart resolution.[459]

Laukki, however, was not pleased with the minority's apathetic opposition to the exclusionist majority. He submitted a statement to the convention, in which he criticized John Spargo for his watered-down opposition to Asiatic exclusion. Spargo's criticism of exclusion accepted the underlying racial logic of the majority – that Asians were potentially unorganizable and could thus be excluded in the future – which had severely hurt the anti-exclusionist case. The key question remained unanswered: "Shall the Socialist Party commit itself to the policy of exclusion of Asiatic labor from America and for what reasons?" In his statement, Laukki sought to put forward a more detailed and evidence-based case for a negative answer to this question. First, he challenged the exclusionist claim that the exclusion of Asians would benefit the U.S. working class by protecting their standard of living. This assumption was based on the antiquated notion that international problems could be resolved through national seclusion. Since the laws of "economic evolution" knew no national boundaries, any attempt to protect working-class interests with artificial political boundaries would prove futile. Failed experiments of utopian socialism and the miserable state of the old craft unions proved as much. Small wonder, the arch-industrial unionist Laukki con-

458 *Proceedings* 1910, p. 319. John Välimäki, who defended the Asians' exclusion on behalf of the Finnish federation, also volunteered for the position. He received 26 votes, one vote short of Robert Hunter, the last man elected.

459 Kipnis 1952, pp. 276–288.

tended, that the whole idea of Asiatic exclusion emanated from "the garbage pile of outworn ideas of the A.F. of L."[460]

Laukki also challenged the racial logic contained in the majority's report: the strength of the working class did not emanate from its racial composition, but from its economic position vis-à-vis the capitalist class. Racial homogeneity or heterogeneity of the working class was thus in no way related to its relative strength. Laukki noted that while the Japanese working class was certainly racially homogeneous, it was weak because of the relatively backward character of Japan's industrial development. The workers striking in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on the other hand, were a racially heterogeneous collective, who were able to press their demands because they operated within a more industrially advanced economy. Thus, to insist that Asian workers would lower the standard of living in America was a thoroughly un-socialist position, pushed by craft unionists who were afraid to lose their antiquated privileges. It was premised on a notion of an unchanging racial essence that went against the realities of industrial capitalism. The Asians, "when thrown into the industrial mills of America cannot forever remain Asiatics." Like other immigrant workers, they would be subsumed within the great mass of America's industrial working class and would develop in their hearts "the same hatred and the same desires as in the hearts of the Western workers." To quicken this process, socialists in America should recruit Asian organizers, establish Asian language federations and fight tooth and nail against any discrimination of Asian workers. Laukki maintained that this was the only position consistent with scientific socialism.[461] Later, he wrote an extensive article on the subject in Finnish, which was published in the theoretical and literary journal *Säkeniä.* In it, he put forward the same

460 Leo Laukki: "Statement of Leo Laukki of the Minority of the Committee on Immigration." In John Spargo (ed.): *National Convention of the Socialist Party, Held at Indianapolis, Ind. May 12 to 18, 1912.* M.A. Donohue & Co.: Chicago, p. 212.

461 Laukki 1912, p. 212–213.

arguments as in his 1912 conference statement, trying to clear Finnish misconceptions on the issue.[462]

Laukki's statement was a far cry from the pragmatist defense of exclusionism that had long characterized the official thinking of the Finnish socialist leadership and press on the matter. When the immigration question was first debated at the SPA convention in 1908, Esther Nieminen's spirited opposition to exclusion had been presented in *Työmies* as a ridiculous fringe position. A male correspondent complained that Nieminen had "crossed all lines" by suggesting that the importation of "Chinese hordes" to America would advance the cause of socialism and international solidarity.[463] At the 1912 convention, Nieminen's husband defended the same anti-exclusionist position as the official representative of the Finnish Socialist Federation. This shift had little to do with the immigration debate itself, which remained largely ignored in the Finnish socialist press. Rather, it reflected a broader sea change within the language federation, which had seen large swaths of Finnish socialists, especially among the embittered Midwestern miners, become alienated from the "pragmatism" of the SPA. Instead, they came to orient themselves towards the more uncompromising position of the IWW. The division was most obvious in regard to the factions' different policies on industrial unionism, but it also revealed wider divergences in thinking patterns. Whereas the mainline Social Democrats emphasized the need for slow and patient political work within the established power structures, the radicals understood society to be more malleable. They argued that industrial capitalism wreaked havoc with the established order and fundamentally changed the mindsets of those workers thrown into its whirlwind. This thought pattern also affected their understanding of race: just like all other old orders, industrial capitalism would also profoundly change the

462 Leo Laukki: "Mitä tilastot kertovat Amerikan siirtolaisuuden yhteiskuntataloudellisista syistä ja seurauksista. Siirtolaistyöläisille siirtolaiskysymyksestä työväenliikkeen kannalta katsottuna" *Säkeniä*, Vol. 7, No. 11–12, November 1913, pp. 331–341.

463 "Sosialistipuolueen kansalliskonventsionista." *Työmies*, 19.5.1908.

racial order. Asiatics would not remain Asiatics in an industrial society, as Laukki had put it.

Laukki's criticism of exclusionism reflected his radical thinking, which drew increasingly on the IWW. It would still be wrong to suggest that the fault lines in the immigration debate could be demarcated as an easy right-left divide. First, not all radicals were against exclusionism, as John Välimäki's defense of Asiatic exclusion at the 1910 convention had illustrated. Moreover, the so-called right wing, grouped around the FSF's East Coast organ *Raivaaja*, was not the most vocal voice for exclusionism. *Raivaaja* was generally more neutral in its reporting on the question than the more radical *Työmies*. After the 1912 convention, *Raivaaja* published a three-part article on immigration as a historical and societal question – probably written by the editor-in-chief Frans J. Syrjälä, the arch-enemy of the radical Laukki – which took a critical position on immigrant restrictionism and came out in support of the Stuttgart resolution of 1907. Problems of immigration were not denied, but it was deemed more advisable to remedy them through societal reforms than with immigrant exclusionism.[464]

While these socialist criticisms of Asian exclusion contested the biological racism of Untermann and other arch-exclusionists, they did not abandon the evolutionist ethos of Marxist socialism. Most critics of exclusion still held that world peoples could be placed on an evolutionary scale, with Europeans more advanced than others. Voices of cultural relativism were rarer, although not non-existent. One letter-writer in *Työmies* contested the anti-Asian rhetoric in the American Socialist Party by pointing to the spiritual virtues of Asian culture. He noted, for example, that the Buddhist religion was considered as "the best religion in the world."[465] For some socialists, these relativist understandings – that cultural difference was in itself a virtue and worth preserva-

464 "Siirtolaisuus historiallisena ja yhteiskunnallisena kysymyksenä." *Raivaaja*, 4.6.1912. Other parts of the series appeared in print on 1.6. and 3.6.1912.

465 J[ohn] Fallström: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies*, 23.1.1908.

tion – were intermixed with evolutionary ethos which held that international capitalism was ushering all of the world's peoples towards similar proletarian consciousness.[466] For Leo Laukki and other radicals, however, evolutionary ethos clearly trumped relativist appreciation of different cultures. They held that capitalism was profoundly shaping the consciousness of people all over the world, and would eventually create a truly international working class with a more or less identical class consciousness. This radical thinking shared the evolutionary language of the nativist pessimists in the Socialist Party, but departed from it in its developmentalist optimism.

2.5. Wobblies and Developmental Optimism

The bitter divisions between the supporters of industrial unionism and those in favor of pragmatic political work, which divided the broader SPA, also tore the FSF asunder. The Socialist Party had won major victories in the 1910 elections and was establishing itself as a respectable political organization. The party also wanted to increase its appeal to the AFL and the broader labor movement, which made it increasingly important to distance itself from the stain of anarchism and sabotage associated with the IWW. At its 1912 convention in Indianapolis, the Socialist Party passed an amendment that called for the expulsion of those members who opposed political action or advocated the use of violence. Bill Haywood, for example, was promptly removed from the National Executive Committee. It became clear that the critics of craft unionism and the advocates of industrial unionism had little future within the party.[467]

466 Alex Halonen's 1906 treatise on the national question and socialism is an example of a mixture between relativist and evolutionary languages. Yet, even he put more emphasis on evolutionary rhetoric. Halonen 1906.

467 David Shannon: *The Socialist Party of America: A History.* Quadrangle: Chicago 1967, pp. 62–80; Foner 1973, pp. 403–413; John Spargo (ed.): *Pro-*

The Socialist Party's inner strife was followed intensively by Finnish-American socialists, who had themselves been divided on the issue ever since the FSF's first convention in 1906. The debate intensified and grew more bitter after the federation's 1909 convention and culminated in the FSF's split in May 1914. Thereafter the radical faction went on to establish their own newspaper (*Sosialisti*) and separate workers' organizations, which soon affiliated with the IWW. The industrial unionist faction was energized by the IWW's successes in the garment workers' strikes in Lawrence, Paterson, Little Falls and elsewhere. They also grew increasingly critical of the Socialist Party's pragmatism and conservatism, arguing that its preoccupation with political work needlessly overshadowed the more important industrial action. Much of their criticism also targeted the tacit approval that the SPA purportedly gave to traditional labor hierarchies in U.S. workplaces. This criticism mostly dealt with the privileging of skilled workers over the unskilled, but it also had other implications. The SPA was depicted as the party of the native-born labor aristocracy, which had forgotten European and Asian immigrants and black Americans.[468]

Questions of race and immigration were far from playing a central part in the internal strife of the Finnish-American socialist movement, but the debate on the role and nature of unions had important implications in regards to how leftists approached the systemic racism prevalent within the U.S. labor movement. Developmental differences between nationalities and races were

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ceedings of the National Convention of the Socialist Party held at Indianapolis, Ind., May 12 to 18, 1912. The Socialist Party: Chicago 1912, p. 195.

468 Douglas J. Ollila, Jr.: "From Socialism to Industrial Unionism (IWW): Social Factors in the Emergence of Left-Labor Radicalism Among Finnish Workers on the Mesabi, 1911–19." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives.* Institute for Migration: Turku 1975, pp. 156–171. Ollila 1975a, pp. 25–62; Sulkanen 1951, pp. 172–192; Hummasti 1979, pp. 90–118. Both the Socialist party loyalists and the radicals published English-language explanations about the strife. See "The Controversy in the Finnish Socialist Federation." *Työmies*, 7.2.1915.

often seen as more ingrained or harder to change in the Socialist Party loyalist camp, than in the radical faction. Internationalism should not mean that all national feelings were dismissed; developmental differences between nationalities and races would not completely abate even with the emergence of socialism and were thus a fact that socialism could ignore only at its own peril.[469] The radical faction often voiced criticism of the chauvinistic culture of the traditional labor unions and their backers in the SPA. Indeed, after its establishment in June 1914, the radical faction's newspaper, *Sosialisti*, emerged as the most vocal critic of Asian exclusion and other forms of racial discrimination within the Finnish-American left. The paper was edited by Leo Laukki from June 1914 until July 1917,[470] and the paper's line on the immigration question largely adhered to the arguments he had made at the 1912 SPA conference. While the paper was not officially affiliated with the IWW until early 1917,[471] a certain Wobbly influence on the paper's position on immigration and race was readily apparent before this date. It was an early dissenting voice regarding the SPA's hesitancy on the question of Asian exclusion, deeming the party's attempts to pass exclusionist resolutions as "an expression of the backward social analysis of the decaying social classes."[472] Yrjö Sirola, a radical teacher at the Work Peoples College, noted

469 Moses Hahl: "Pienten kansojen tulevaisuus." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 9, No. 11–12, November 1915, pp. 523–527; "Karl Marxin käsitys kansallisuudesta." *Työmies*, 5.1.1916.

470 Ahola 1973, p. 85.

471 The radical faction was beset by inner struggles of its own throughout its early years. While all radicals were sympathetic to industrial unionism, they were not all against participation in the Socialist Party's political work, even though they were critical of the party's current policies – hence the name *Sosialisti* ("The Socialist") for the newspaper. Many also remained wary of the "anarchist" IWW. This more moderate faction was soon defeated, however, and in 1917 *Sosialisti* (from 1917 onwards *Industrialisti*) became an official Finnish-language organ of the IWW. For a more detailed account of these inner struggles, see Sulkanen 1951, pp. 194–196.

472 Jukka: "Jupakkaa." *Sosialisti*, 18.6.1914.

that socialist positions on immigration could be explained with regard to their respective positions in the labor hierarchy: those in the higher echelons opposed immigration as they were fearful of competition, while those on the lower ladders could see the exclusionist talk for the deception and betrayal of internationalism that it was.[473] Indeed, according to Laukki, immigration was the issue that most clearly brought forward the key differences between the revisionists and the revolutionaries.[474]

During the First World War, immigration to the United States decreased significantly, but the immigration debate did not abate. In early 1917, the restrictionists finally succeeded in passing a new Immigration Act that banned immigration from the "Asiatic Barred Zone" (all of Asia with the exception of Japan and the Philippines) and for the first time also brought in major restrictions on European immigration, prohibiting the immigration of illiterate individuals.[475] In commenting on the debate on the literacy test, the editors of *Työmies* sympathized with the desire of American workers to bar the entry of "backward" immigrants from Eastern Europe, Western Asia and China, who might be used by capitalists to lower standards of living, but they still remained wary of the act. The editors warned, for example, that capitalists could use such exclusionist legislation to bar entry to political refugees and activists. The requirement that immigrants be literate was seen also as being hypocritical when so many Americans were themselves illiterate.[476]

What made Finnish socialists especially wary about fully endorsing the anti-immigration rhetoric was the ambivalent position of Finns. This ambivalence was illustrated, for example, in the fall of 1915 when three Finnish men and an Italian were in-

473 Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, 1.3.1915.

474 Editorial comment (most likely by Laukki) in Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, 27.2.1915.

475 Higham 1968.

476 "Sulkeeko Amerika ovensa poliittisilta pakolaisilta?" *Työmies*, 2.4.1916; K. T.; Meyer London: "Amerikan siirtolaisuuskysymys." *Työmies*, 27.4.1916; "Amerikalaisten lukutaidottomuus." *Työmies*, 4.5.1916.

volved in the murder-robbery of a wealthy New York jeweler. The crime and the ensuing manhunt was widely covered by the New York press and the nationalities of the perpetrators were emphasized.[477] The August 1915 lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish factory superintendent who was accused of rape, had taken place in Georgia only weeks before the New York incident.[478] Coming in the midst of anti-immigrant fervor, the case played into the narrative of increasingly violent immigrant crime. Crime statistics had for years been a go-to resource for opponents of "uncontrolled" immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, and rising criminality was routinely presented as a cause for stringent immigration restriction. The superintendent of New York state prisons, for example, argued in his 1909 report that "the crowded condition of our prisons is largely due to the influx of immigrants during the last few years." Stricter immigration legislation offered the solution to the law-enforcement crisis: the report suggested that the United States should work for "the exclusion of this undesirable class of immigrants."[479] Similar sentiments were echoed in other government reports as well as in newspaper editorials, op-ed pieces, academic literature, and politicians' speeches before and during the World War I. [480]

In January 1916, the Finnish-American socialist theoretical and literary journal *Säkeniä* published an article by journalist Toivo Hiltunen on immigration and crime. Hiltunen lamented how the recent New York murder case involving Finnish perpe-

477 "Nichols Slayers Named to Police." *New York Times,* 10.9.1915; "Arrest Nichols Suspect." *New York Times*, 25.9.1915; "Confesses the Murder of Mrs. Nichols, Waltonen, Former Employe, Held in Michigan." *New York Times,* 13.9.1916; "Clears Up Mystery of Nichols Murder." *New York Times,* 14.9.1916; "Waltonen Jumps From Moving Train." *New York Times,* 16.9.1916.

478 Higham 1968, pp. 183–186; Amy Louise Wood: *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940.* The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill 2009, pp. 77–78.

479 Quoted in Hourwich 1912, p. 478.

480 Higham 1968, pp. 183–186.

trators had again inflamed discussions about immigrant susceptibility to crime, and threatened to brand all Finns as potential criminals. Hiltunen noted how the recent discussion on immigrant criminals was part of a larger trend where the media and government authorities had started to present rising immigrant crime as reason for immigrant exclusion. He then challenged the connection between rising immigration and rising crime by referring to socialist statistician Isaac Hourwich's 1912 article on immigration and crime in the *American Journal of Sociology.* In his article, Hourwich had presented statistical information that directly countered the superfluous connection between immigration and crime. Economic depression, not immigration, had caused the recent spikes in crime, Hourwich suggested, while long-term trends in immigration and crime clearly demonstrated that there was no connection between the two phenomena. Steep rise in immigration had not caused any correspondent rise in crime – in fact, in New York, for example, the trend was the reverse. Moreover, the foreign-born were not overrepresented in New York crime statistics, Hourwich held, indicating that the idea of immigrants' in-born susceptibility to crime was superfluous.[481]

Hiltunen then applied Hourwich's analysis to Minnesota and Michigan where Finnish immigrants were often singled out for their purported susceptibility to crime and mental illness. Hiltunen lamented that even the Finnish-American bourgeoisie reinforced this image by decrying the overrepresentation of Finns in Northern Michigan's prisons and mental institutions. That Finns were well represented in Upper Peninsula's prisons and mental asylums should come as no surprise, Hiltunen held, considering that Finns were one of the largest immigrant nationalities in the region. Moreover, most Finns worked in the mining industry and were thus susceptible to all the social ills caused by that dangerous, inhumane line of work. Sudden spikes in Finnish criminality should also not be seen as reflective of a broader trend, the writer

481 Toivo Hiltunen: "Siirtolaisuus ja rikoksellisuus." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Jan 1916, pp. 27–33. See also Isaac A. Hourwich: "Immigration and Crime." *The American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 17, No. 4, Jan 1912, pp. 478–490.

argued, since criminality always rose during economic downturns, as had been the case in 1908.[482] For Hiltunen, then, immigrant criminality could be directly explained with environmental factors and only radical changes in social conditions could ever succeed in eliminating criminality. It should be remembered that Hiltunen had in 1908 argued strongly in favor of Asian exclusion.[483] It seems that for him, European immigrant behavior was more easily explained with social and economic factors, while he viewed Asian immigrants as beyond the same societal dynamics. Indeed, despite the wariness they expressed regarding the indiscriminate restriction of all European immigration, *Työmies* remained largely supportive of the American working class's right to prevent "backward" and "undeveloped" races from immigrating to America.[484]

However, the differences in approach did not overcome some of the shared premises. The radicals, like the anti-immigration socialists, differentiated between the "progressive" and "backward" races and depicted societal change as an evolutionary process, whereby lower forms of being developed towards ever higher stages. Asians, black Southerners, and southern and eastern Europeans were referred to as "backward" labor and their lowly development was at times invoked as a reason for the purported difficulties in organizing them. The radicals that commented on the migration of black labor to the North noted that one of the reasons for this influx was capitalists' need to recruit "less developed" workers to their factories in order to make labor organizing more difficult.[485] That migrants from Europe and Asia hailed from countries at differing developmental stages was also seen as a problem. In some editorials, the radical paper referred to South Europeans and Asians as harder to organize and made the

482 Hiltunen 1916, p. 31–33.

483 [Toivo Hiltunen]: "Keltainen vaara." *Työmies* 18.1.1908.

484 See, for example, "Burnett'in siirtolaisrajoituslakiehdotus." *Työmies*, 8.4.1916; "Rotuvihaa herätetään." *Työmies*, 3.6.1917.

485 "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen." *Industrialisti*, 14.9.1917.

inference that open immigration served capitalist interests and that capitalists used immigration to import cheap, subservient labor that suited its needs.[486] An editorial in *Sosialisti* noted that "The United States is peculiar among nations because it is such a mixture of nationalities (*kansallisuuksien sekasoppa*). This presents great many difficulties for the labor movement, because the different nationalities come from countries at different levels of development, bringing with them their varied customs and beliefs."[487] During the World War, editors hoped that the war-time decrease in immigration would ease organizing, thereby implicitly acknowledging the logic that immigrants might have a detrimental effect on organizing.[488] This subscription to the hierarchical ranking of races, based on their development, goes to show that the radicals' detachment from Socialist Party nativism was not as complete as many of them liked to imagine.

While the radicals subscribed to the same socialist developmental hierarchy as their Socialist Party rivals, they were far more optimistic about the developmental potential of "less developed" peoples. In Wobbly analysis, industrial capitalism would tear asunder all pre-capitalist attachments and forms of belonging – all that was solid really would melt into air. Laukki and other *Sosialisti* writers deemed immigration a natural function of capitalist development, which is why attempts to restrict it were not only futile, but also detrimental to the socialist cause. Since socialism would come about only after industrial capitalism had reached its predetermined apogee, it was unwise for socialists to meddle with capitalism's natural cross-border evolution by setting up artificial political barriers. Rather than oppose immigration, workers should understand that labor mobility was a natural feature of capitalist development that would eventually culminate

486 "Siirtolaisuus lisääntyy." *Sosialisti*, 23.6.1914; "Siirtolaisuus lisääntyy." 23.7.1914; "Hallitus kapitalisteille siirtolaistyövoiman värväriksi. *Sosialisti*, 3.2.1915; "Siirtolaistyöläisten haaliminen Lännelle." *Sosialisti*, 4.3.1915.

487 "Kansallisuuksien sekasoppa." *Sosialisti*, 4.12.1914. See also "Siirtolaisuus lisääntyy." *Sosialisti*, 23.6.1914.

488 "Sodan vaikutus siirtolaisuuteen." *Sosialisti*, 2.9.1915.

in a revolutionary situation.[489] While newly-arrived immigrants were often more backward than the workers with more experience on the shop floor, the iron rules of industrial capitalism would soon waken their class consciousness. The "all-changing nature of capitalism" ensured that no group of workers would be left untouched: black workers as well as Asians would be exposed to the same circumstances as whites and would develop an identical class consciousness.[490] The California Japanese were a case in point, one article noted, for whom strikebreaking had already become anathema.[491] The writer of the article noted "The willingness to live as well as possible forces workers to organize, no matter who or where they are."[492]

This developmentalist optimism was a powerful countercurrent against the racial determinism that was so prominent in the contemporary labor movement. An emphasis on the all-changing character of capitalism and the notion that all unskilled workers would develop an identical consciousness made it harder to maintain the idea that racial differences were politically significant. In his four-part article on the immigration question, Yrjö Sirola, a former Social Democratic MP in Finland who had lived in America and worked as a teacher at the Work Peoples College in 1910–1914, drew on the work of immigration scholars Max Kohler and Isaac Hourwich in order to contest the notion that social problems related to contemporary Asian or European immigration could be traced back to the racial character of these

489 Jukka: "Jupakkaa." *Sosialisti*, 18.6.1914; "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen I." *Industrialisti*, 14.9.1917; "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen II." *Industrialisti*, 15.9.1917.

490 Jukka: "Jupakkaa." *Sosialisti*, 18.6.1914; "Kansallisuuksien sekasoppa." *Sosialisti*, 4.12.1914; Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen I." Industrialisti, 14.9.1917; "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen II." *Industrialisti*, 15.9.1917.

491 "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen II." *Industrialisti*, 15.9.1917.

492 "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen I." *Industrialisti*, 14.9.1917.

immigrants.[493] Exclusionists conveniently forgot that even "old" immigrants – the Irish, Germans, Swedes and other Northern Europeans – had faced severe social problems on their arrival, while the problems of contemporary immigrants had been greatly exaggerated. Sirola decried that even socialists like Untermann had insisted that racial traits and feelings would remain unchanged, even in a socialist society. This illustrated how the Socialist Party's analysis lacked a proper understanding of capitalism as a force that changed the consciousness of all people that came into contact with it. He urged "petty-bourgeois race theorists" to heed Kautsky's words on the question of race and socialism. The more Kautsky had acquainted himself with economics, the less enthralled he had been of a "purely natural scientific, Darwinist notion of survival of the fittest race as an explanation for development as opposed to Marxist notion of class struggle."[494] With this in mind, Sirola noted the following:

> Practical experience and research have illustrated that no race is incapable of capitalistic economic life or culture because of its racial characteristics. And whatever conflicts there are between, for example, American and Asian powers along racial lines, the fundamental reasons for these are always socio-economic. Untermann's idea that races can develop into 'productive zones' on their own will surely prove to be utopian. World trade, international capital – and immigration, will make sure of that. And

493 Max Kohler: "Some Aspects of the Immigration Problem." *American Economic Review*, Vol. 4, No.1, March 1914, pp. 93–108; Isaac A. Hourwich: *Immigration and Labor: The Economic Aspects of European Immigration to the United States*. G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York 1912.

494 Sirola was an Orthodox Marxist and a devout student of Kautsky. Sirola was most likely referring to Kautsky's 1880 book on population increase and evolution which was translated to Finnish in 1911. See Karl Kautsky: *Lisääntyminen ja kehitys luonnossa sekä yhteiskunnassa.* Kyminlaakson työväen sanomalehti- ja kirjapaino-osuuskunta: Kotka 1911. On Sirola's appreciation of Kautsky, see Heikkilä 1993, p. 130.

socialists should take this into account when they formulate their positions.[495]

That it was economic position, not racial character, that determined the approach of an individual or people to labor organizing received powerful confirmation in the summer of 1916 as Minnesota's Mesabi Range was again convulsed by a major miners' strike. The strike began in early June 1916 at the Alpena Mine in Virginia, Minnesota, as a protest against the contract wage system whereby wages were determined by the amount of ore produced. This system privileged those workers who worked in shafts that were rich in ore and that were easy to excavate. The IWW quickly sent its organizers to the area, where they began to coordinate the 10,000–20,000 workers who had gone on strike. While "peaceful" by the standards of the time, the strike was still characterized by violent outbreaks. Both strikers and strikebreakers were attacked, but most of the violence was carried out by the mining company's deputized security officers. After an early July scuffle between the police and strikers, in which a deputy and a Finnish soft-drink peddler were killed, the IWW organizers were jailed for incitation. The local media was generally hostile towards the strikers, but the miners also received sympathy from local government officials and the broader labor movement. While this sympathy reined back the worst of the company repression, it was not sufficiently strident to salvage the beleaguered miners. The strike ended in September, with the exhausted men forced to return to work.[496]

The 1916 Mesabi Range strike has received less attention in the scholarship of the Finnish-American labor movement than the 1907 Mesabi strike or the 1913 Copper Country strike. The reason for this is obvious: Finnish miners were far less prominent

495 Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, 1.3.1915. See also Laukki 1913.

496 Neil Betten: "Riot, Revolution, Repression in the Iron Range Strike of 1916." *Minnesota History*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1968, pp. 86–93; Ronning 2003, pp. 364–365.

on the picket lines in 1916 than in the previous miners' strikes. When an IWW organizer visited the Range in May and met with local Finnish Wobblies, the Finns asked the IWW to send Italian and Slavic speaking organizers to the area: "the Finnish boys told me that the 'blacks' [Eastern and Southern Europeans] … everywhere and all the time talk about strike."[497] Ronning has argued that Finns provided "much of the organizational leadership" in 1916, by opening their halls for strike meetings and "infus[ed] their radical sentiment into the rhetoric and ideology of the 1916 strike,"[498] but his account somewhat inflates their significance. Most strike leaders were not Finns, but Italian and South Slavic immigrants, as were most of the strikers themselves. This was yet another demonstration of the adage that "the scab of today is the striker tomorrow," as a union organizer at western mines had put it.[499] The South Slavs and Italians were often miners who had been moved to the area in 1907 in order to break the strike of Finnish and the more established Italian and Slavic miners. The decreased importance of Finnish strikers was partly due to changed demographics – there were proportionately fewer Finnish miners in 1916 than there had been in 1907. It is also true, as Ronning notes, that there were many Finns who were active strikers and who were blacklisted when the strike was defeated.[500] But there were also many Finnish miners who refused to join the industrial action.

Throughout the strike, the radical *Sosialisti* decried the overrepresentation of Finns as "scabs" and published names of compatriots who had betrayed the working-class cause, either as strikebreakers or as deputized company henchmen (*pyssy-*

497 Quoted in Dubofsky 1969, pp. 321–322.

498 Ronning 2003, p. 365.

499 Quoted in Roediger & Esch 2012, p. 80.

500 Ronning 2003. Also see the interview with Oiva Halonen, carried out by Paul Buhle. 27 February 1978. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University. Halonen notes that there were many Finns who were blacklisted after the strike and had to move from Minnesota.

hurtat).[501] "Scab lists" distributed on the Range were filled with Finnish names, a *Sosialisti* correspondent lamented, and even many purported radicals and sympathizers of the IWW had apparently refused to down their tools. A Finnish IWW organizer lamented that even those Finns who did leave their workplaces did not, barring a few exceptions, join the other nationalities in marches, committee meetings and on picket lines, but had sulked passively at home waiting for the strike to end.[502] The radicals directed most of their criticism against *Työmies*, the Socialist Party newspaper, which retained a critical distance from the IWW-led strike. While *Työmies* covered the strike sympathetically in its news pages, its editorial commentaries remained lukewarm. In their postmortems, the socialist editors pointed out that the wildcat strike lacked competent leadership, its demands were unclear and that the strikers had been duped by the mischievous IWW – small wonder, therefore, that many of the more mature workers had failed to join the picket lines.[503] Ronning, who used only English-language sources, misses this intra-Finnish debate and ends up producing an image of "radical Finns" that unduly homogenizes the politically diverse Finnish left and presents its complex engagement with the 1916 strike in an overtly romantic light.

Indeed, Ronning's romanticized image of Finnish radicals as counter-cultural rebels stands in stark contrast with the bleak image that Finnish radicals themselves had of their compatriots.

501 Virginian lakkolaiset: "Suomalaiset 'skääppeinä.'" *Sosialisti*, 6.87.1916; "Terästrustiko kasvattanut suomalaisista itselleen skääppejä ja kätyreitä." *Sosialisti*, 1.7.1916; "Suomalaisia skääppinä." *Sosialisti*, 6.7.1916; "Suomalaisia skääppejä Kinneyssä." *Sosialisti*, 6.7.1916; "Suomalaisia pyssyhurttina." *Sosialisti*, 6.7.1916; "Avoin kirje skääpille." *Sosialisti*, 24.7.1916; "Minnesotan raudankaivajain lakko ja suomalaisten suhtautuminen siihen." *Sosialisti*, 12.9.1916.

502 "Todelliset syyt miksi suomalaiset Minnesotan raudankaivajien lakossa skääppäsivät." *Sosialisti*, 28.11.1916.

503 K. Aine: "Minnesotan lakon johdosta." *Työmies*, 26.9.1916. See also "Mitä Minnesotan työläiset ajattelevat." *Työmies*, 27.9.1916; "Vähän vielä Minnesotan lakosta." *Työmies*, 3.10.1916; "Jälkihavaintoja Minnesotan lakkomailta." *Työmies*, 7.11.1916.

The 1916 strike offered few occasions for ethnic pride for Finnish radicals. Editorials in *Sosialisti* constantly decried Finnish scabbing and contrasted the emasculated feebleness of Finns in an unfavorable light with South Europeans, who displayed a "readiness for battle" and "unrivalled manliness."[504] The 1916 strike was seen as an illustration of the erroneous assertion that Finns were somehow uniquely radical. Despite imagining themselves as being uniquely enlightened in working-class affairs, Finns had demonstrated that they were quite capable of betraying the cause. Adding insult to injury, it was the much-maligned "black" South Europeans, deemed unorganizable by many arrogant Finnish socialists, who had taken the leadership in the industrial struggle. A distraught Finnish radical wrote that "We used to call the South Europeans blacks. Now the South Europeans have all the reasons in the world to call us pitch black."[505] A Finnish writer from Virginia, Minnesota also bemoaned his strikebreaking compatriots: "Oh you white-faces who are blacker than black." Glancing over seemingly endless lines of Finnish names on a scab list, he had been ashamed to admit that "the supposedly 'white' Finns" had "beaten those 'Polacks' and 'Dagoes' in stealing bread from our own and others' table."[506] The *Sosialisti*'s strike coverage painted a bleak picture: Finns had betrayed the working class and had demonstrated the falsehood of believing that Finns possessed a unique ability for labor organization.

The 1916 strike experience, however, provided countenance to the radical/IWW analysis that disassociated the capability for labor organizing from racial character. What Sirola had suggested in his 1915 essay on immigrant exclusion – that "no race is incapable of capitalistic economic life or culture because of its racial characteristics"[507] – had proven to be true on the Mesabi Range, with the supposedly unorganizable South Europeans taking the

504 "Ja taas antoivat mustat meille opetuksen." *Sosialisti*, 21.7.1916.

505 Ed. S.: "Vetoomus Evelethin suomalaisille työläisille." *Sosialisti*, 1.7.1916. The original was typed in bold.

506 "Minnesotasta. Virginia." *Sosialisti*, 7.7.1916.

507 Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, 1.3.1915.

lead in industrial action. The "blacks" had clearly shown that they were more than capable of performing their role as industrial workingmen in a modern capitalist society. Unfortunately for Finns, the 1916 strike had also proven the opposite to be true: no race was inherently class conscious. In their analysis of the strike, the radicals explained the Finns' refusal to join the strike by referring to their changed position in the Mesabi Range's labor hierarchy. Whereas in 1907 Finns had represented the lowest echelons of the underground pecking order, by 1916 they had acquired more prestigious positions as skilled miners, electricians, painters and foremen. South Europeans, on the other hand, had taken the Finns' position on the lowest rungs of the ladder, which explained why they had taken the lead in organizing. Thus, the better-positioned Finns had dismissed the strike as a "blacks' strike" and identified their interests as being more in line with the company than with the strikers.[508] In a six-part postmortem on Finnish strikebreaking, a Finnish IWW organizer noted Finns' privileged position vis-à-vis Southern Europeans as one of the main reasons for his compatriots' wayward behavior. South Europeans had to settle for inferior jobs and they were routinely singled out for other humiliations – they were required to give bribes or to allow bosses to sleep with their wives in exchange for work, and they were systematically cheated in wage payments.[509]

The 1916 experience, and others like it, further alienated Wobblies from the notion of organizing along national lines. While

508 "'Kaikkien maiden työläiset liittykää yhteen!'" *Sosialisti*, 20.6.1916; "Rauta-alueen suomalaiset työläiset, valta on teidän, te myös itse päättäkää!" *Sosialisti*, 3.7.1916; "Suomalaisille työväenjärjestöille ja työväenlehdille." *Sosialisti*, 4.7.1916; "Nykyinen lakkoasema." *Sosialisti*, 4.7.1916; "Trusti ja rauta-alueen lakko." *Sosialisti*, 12.7.1916; "Lakkoasema." *Sosialisti*, 25.7.1916; "Ja mikä tulee olemaan seurauksena suomalaisten skääppäämisestä." *Sosialisti*, 19.7.1916; Mukana ollut: "Todistuskappale suomalaisen sosialistisen skääppiruton vaikutuksista." *Sosialisti*, 4.9.1916; "'Jos me olisimme nousseet taisteluun, olisivat suomalaiset skääpänneet kuten Mesaba-alueellakin.'" *Sosialisti*, 15.9.1916.

509 "Todelliset syyt miksi suomalaiset Minnesotan raudankaivajien lakossa skääppäsivät." *Sosialisti*, 23.11.1916.

Finnish IWW sympathizers had initially discussed the establishment of a language federation on the Socialist Party model, these ideas were eventually rejected as foreign to the Wobbly spirit. A core principle of industrial unionism was the general organization of members in industry as a whole; it made no sense to separate national groups into their own organizations. In Astoria, Oregon, for example, the IWW maintained that all its cultural functions needed to be bilingual, with both Finnish and English-speaking orators.[510] One Finnish Wobbly argued that "Organizing is done on work sites. Language federations are a great hindrance in this work. The more intimately different nationalities interact in organizations, the better they know each other's mentality and aspirations and the more unified the union will be."[511] The Wobblies extended this opposition to exclusion to its logical conclusion: no nationalities or races should remain outside industrial unions no matter how "backward" these peoples were deemed to be. The support for racial exclusion and discrimination demonstrated by traditional unions was often invoked as one of the chief weaknesses of the AFL and other similar bodies.[512]

* * *

The radicals understood that capitalism flattened the distinct mindsets of nationalities and races, which proved to be a powerful countercurrent against the racial determinism that was so prevalent in the contemporary labor movement and in society at large. But this egalitarian ethos also served to hide the ways in which the systemic and sustained racial discrimination against Asians and other nonwhite workers had conditioned their position – and that politics centered on economic class alone would not necessarily remedy these racial discrepancies. This tension became evident as the radicals and Wobblies commented on the

510 Hummasti 1979, p. 107.

511 Geo Humon: "Pois kielijärjestöperiaate." *Teollisuustyöläinen*, 6.2.1917.

512 Dubofsky 1973, pp. 127; Foner 1973, pp. 123–124; Rosenberg 1995.

increasing migration of black Southerners to the industrial cities in the North. An article in *Industrialisti* noted in September 1917 that "revolutionary workers should not be worried about the transportation of Negroes from the South." Rather, they should understand that such movements of workers were a natural occurrence in the development of capitalism and would eventually lead to a revolutionary situation. While black workers were "less developed" in the present moment than white workers, they would in due course develop an identical class consciousness to the white worker. Interracial solidarity would emerge as if a by-product of black workers' exposure to industrial capitalism.[513]

To be sure, these visions proved far from prophetic. Black workers entering northern neighborhoods and factories were not welcomed with cries of solidarity, but with contempt and anger from white workers. In some cities, they were attacked in pogrom-like rampages. During the summer of 1919 alone, white mobs wreaked havoc in black neighborhoods of Chicago, Washington, D.C., Omaha and many other cities. White rage of this magnitude suggested that interracial solidarity would require more than changes to the purportedly pre-capitalist consciousness of black workers. The explosion of white supremacist violence across the North – even as far north as Duluth, the "Helsinki of America" – called for Finnish socialists to re-evaluate their thinking on race, class and the politics of solidarity.

513 "Kotimaisen ja ulkomaalaisen työvoiman hankkiminen II." *Industrialisti*, 15.9.1917.

3. White Crimes: Lynching and Race Riots

In the late 1930s, an informant of the WPA compared race relations between the United States and his native Vyborg, a cosmopolitan city in southeastern Finland near the Russian border: "We are always told in Finland that in the United States there was great economic and social opportunity, and above anything else, there were no racial hatreds as were known in Czarist Russia and Central Europe. But, believe it or not, I found more racial hatreds, of Jews, Catholics, and Negroes especially, than ever I saw in Finland. In fact, Finland was comparatively free of racial prejudice, here many nationalities, Russians, Germans, Jews, Swedes, live side by side."[514] This image of a Finland that was free of racial prejudice was certainly idealistic,[515] but the comparison still provides a good illustration of how much was new to Finnish newcomers regarding the U.S. racial system. One of the more unfathomable aspects for Finns was the violent hatred of black Americans, which was especially manifested in the phenomenon of lynching.

The peak years of Finnish immigration to the United States coincided with an unprecedented upsurge in vigilante violence against black Americans. In the South, this violence took the form

514 Interview with Norman Steel by Stanley Levine. 8 December 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

515 One can compare it to Rosa Emilia Clay's experiences of living in late 1800s and early 1900s Finland. Clay was the adopted daughter of a Finnish missionary couple from Oamboland. After experiencing severe racism in Finland, she immigrated to America in 1904. See Arvo Lindewall: *Rosalia*. Kansallinen kustannuskomitea: Yonkers, N.Y. 1942.

of lynching – the ritualized murder of black men and women that often took place in public and in front of large white audiences. Between 1880 and 1930, white lynch mobs claimed the lives of at least 3,220 black Americans, but since most deeds went unreported, the real figure is almost certainly higher. The terrorizing effect of the practice was amplified by its public nature: hundreds or thousands of people often witnessed the violence first-hand and millions of others read detailed descriptions of the murders in newspapers. Lynching became an intrinsic part of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century American media culture. In his 1929 exposé of "Judge Lynch," the NAACP's Walter White commented that lynching was "an almost integral part of our national folkways."[516]

But anti-black violence was not confined below the Mason Dixon Line. As migration of black Southerners to the North increased in the early decades of the 1900s, peaking during the First World War and the interwar period, many northern cities also witnessed scenes of white-on-black attacks – and unprecedented black resistance. Contemporaneous parlance termed these altercations "race riots," but the violence was not symmetrical. Most assailants were white, while most victims were black.[517] Since Finnish immigrants arrived in the country during the bloodiest years of this anti-black terror, few Finns could avoid becoming at least passive participants. Reading from Finnish-language newspapers of "yet another *neekeri* ("Negro") lynched,"[518] or witness-

516 Walter White: *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame 2001 [1929], vii. See also W. Fitzhugh Brundage: *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1993; Stewart E. Tolnay & E.M. Beck: *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1995; Philip Dray: *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America.* Modern Library: New York 2003.

517 Michael J. Pfeifer (ed.): *Lynching Beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence Outside the South*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana 2013.

518 See, for example, "Taas neekeri lynchattu." *Työmies*, 13.7.1920; "Taasen neekeri hirtetty." *Työmies*, 31.8.1920.

ing first-hand the assaults on blacks on the streets of Chicago or Duluth, they became part of the public audience of this violence. A few were also direct instigators. This involvement profoundly shaped their thinking on race.

In witnessing the brutal anti-black violence, Finnish radicals were forced to reconsider some of their most cherished notions about the relationship of race and class. Was it really just economic class oppression that was holding black Americans back? If white and black workers were equally oppressed, why were only the latter the targets of systematic pogroms and extralegal public torture and executions? And if exposure to similar industrial conditions would automatically result in interracial class solidarity, why were white workers so often implicated as being the instigators of anti-black terror?

Once again, Finnish radicals were not unified when seeking answers to these questions. Drawing on broader discussions within the U.S. socialist and syndicalist movements, they arrived at markedly different conclusions. Some found fault among the blacks themselves: they were supposedly too culturally backward and mentally arrested, as the race had its origins in the Tropics and therefore lacked the ability to survive in a modern industrial economy. While white Americans may have been at fault for keeping blacks in their arrested state, it was still argued that it was black behavior that explained the brutal but understandable white counter-reactions. Others laid blame more firmly with white Americans. They depicted anti-black violence as a part of a wider anti-labor crackdown during the World War and the immediate postwar period. Assaults on black Chicagoans in the summer of 1919 and attacks on Finnish conscientious objectors and radical newspapers were seen as part and parcel of the same nativist assault on labor. Yet, there was also a growing understanding that there was something in black oppression that could not be equated with other forms of oppression in America.

3.1. Southern Horrors, American Crimes

Historians of the racial thought of European immigrants have long acknowledged that the immigrants did not arrive to the United States as racial *tabula rasae*, but had preconceptions about race. In regards to Slovak immigrants, Robert Zecker has noted that they based their conceptions of non-white people in America on European racial stereotypes about Slavs, as well as stereotypes about other marginalized people, such as gypsies and Jews. They also based their opinions in America on prior encounters with Africans in European ports, entertainment venues and so on, as well as the religiously-tinged stereotypes about "black" Turks.[519] Finns, too, as residents of an ethnically varied country and subjects of an even more diverse empire were aware of human phenotypical variance, as well as with stereotypes associated with such variance. They were "race thinkers before coming," to employ David Roediger's apt term.[520]

One key distributor of such knowledge was the Lutheran Church and especially the Finnish Missionary Society that had started missionary work in southwestern Africa in the 1870s. Most Finnish immigrants were undoubtedly at least vaguely aware of imagery that associated dark skin color with paganism, or even with evil.[521] Indeed, that European immigrants drew on religious discourse when encountering black people was not unusual, as David Roediger has shown, for example, in his discussion of Irish immigrants. The association of black people with the devil or with evil generally has long roots in the European Christian tradition.[522]

An interesting illustration of this is an account by E. A. Hedman, a Finnish socialist, dating from 1925, of the Wyoming mining town of Hanna. In the late 1800s Hanna was a diverse mining town, with large Finnish and black communities. In a chapter entitled "the Finnish Negro," Hedman tells the story of a black

519 Zecker 2013, pp. 50–67.

520 Roediger 2005, p. 110.

521 On the influence of Finnish missionary work on Finnish historical imagery of Africans, see Löytty 2006; Löytty & Rastas 2011.

522 Roediger 2003, 137–138.

miner, Jimmy Brown (or, "Rauni" in its Finnicized form), who by learning Finnish becomes a redeemed member of the town's Finnish worker community. According to Hedman, Mr. Brown was a "full-blooded Negro," who, "for one reason or another, had come to resent his own race," while "being irresistibly drawn to the Finns."[523] Hedman tells how Mr. Brown learns to speak Finnish, joins a Finnish brass band as a bass trombone player and how he develops a habit of greeting newly-arrived Finnish immigrants at the town's train station. These immigrants treat the Finnish-speaking black man with suspicion, wondering if he's "the devil" or "Beelzebub himself."[524] The story illustrates how early Finnish migrants may have easily socialized with America's non-white people, but that they did not arrive in the country completely devoid of preconceptions about people of a darker complexion.[525]

Yet, religious discourse was not the only way late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Finns became aware of phenotypically different people and stereotypes related to skin color or complexion. From the sixteenth century, Finland had been home to a relatively large Roma population, who were referred to in Finnish as *mustalaiset* ("Blackies"), a reference to their dark complexion. The Roma traversed the Finnish countryside and established mutually beneficial relationships with Finnish farmers. They offered their labor and received food and shelter in return. On the one hand, this level of mostly banal and cordial everyday interaction was underpinned by a more sinister political and media discourse, in which the *mustalaiset* were represented as an

523 Hedman 1925, 113.

524 Hedman 1925, 115–116.

525 Jimmy Brown is also mentioned in other sources. Sulkanen, for example, mentions him in his history of the Finnish-American labor movement. He notes him as one of the victims of Hanna's 1903 mining accident, which claimed the lives of 169 miners. Sulkanen describes Brown as a "black-skinned man who befriended the Finns and even learned a few words of Finnish." Sulkanen 1951, p. 38. Oskari Tokoi, who briefly lived in Hanna in the mid-1890s, also mentions Mr. Brown in his memoirs. Tokoi 1947, p. 64.

inherently criminal and alien racial presence. On the other hand, they were perceived as an exotic group whose traveling lifestyle was romanticized. In addition to the Roma, the Finnish countryside was traversed by German, Russian, Tatar and other peddlers. The southern cities of Helsinki, Turku and Vyborg, in particular, were home to Jewish, Russian, Tatar and other minorities.[526] Rosa Emilia Clay, often noted as the first African citizen of Finland, tells how she was frequently teased for being a "gypsy" or a "Jew" in late nineteenth-century Finland.[527] Thus, Finland's "own" minorities were an important reference point for Finns encountering those of African descent for the first time.

Stereotypes of the Roma, in particular, carried over the Atlantic. The Finnish-American labor theater staged many so-called gypsy plays, which told romanticized stories of the Roma. Timo Riippa, who has studied the Finnish-American labor theater, has noted that "Finns seemed to have a particular fascination for the gypsies," with labor theaters routinely staging plays with titles such as *Mustalaisruhtinatar* [The Gypsy Duchess], *Mustalainen* [The Gypsy], *Unkarin mustalaiset* [Hungary's Gypsies], and *Mustalais-Manja* [Manja the Gypsy].[528] Zecker notes that similar plays were also popular with Slovak immigrant drama groups.[529]

526 On the history of the Roma in Finland, see Panu Pulma (ed.): *Suomen romanien historia.* SKS: Helsinki 2012. On the ethnic variance on the late 1800s Finnish countryside, see Antti Häkkinen: "Kiertäminen, kulkeminen ja muukalaisuuden kohtaaminen 1800-luvun lopun ja 1900-luvun alun maalaisyhteisöissä" in Antti Häkkinen, Panu Pulma & Miika Tervonen*: Vieraat kulkijat – tutut talot. Näkökulmia etnisyyden ja köyhyyden historiaan Suomessa*. SKS: Helsinki 2005, pp. 225–262. Some Finnish immigrants also came from these minorities. New York, for example, had many Jewish Finnish businessmen (Simo Kapiainen: *Suomalainen yrittäjyys New Yorkissa 1850–1930.* MA Thesis. University of Helsinki: Helsinki 2012). At least one Finnish-American labor leader, Ida Pasanen, was of Roma background. She was the illegitimate daughter of a Roma waitress and a civil engineer. Wargelin Brown 1986, p. 136.

527 Lindewall, 1942, p. 70.

528 Riippa 1981, p. 288, f. 21, 283. See also Syrjälä 1925, p. 107.

529 Zecker 2013, pp. 55–56.

The experiences of Rosa Emilia Clay, the first Finnish citizen of African descent, provide a good illustration of the contours of Finnish immigrants' understanding of phenotypical difference. Clay became a noted actress and singer in the Finnish-American labor theater after she immigrated to the United States in 1904. She was born in Ovamboland in Southwestern Africa, and was brought to Finland in 1888. Thereafter she enrolled at the Sortavala Teachers' Seminar and became a teacher, but immigrated to America in 1904 in order to escape being routinely harassed. In New York, she became active in the emerging Finnish socialist movement, and soon became the leader of the choir of the socialist local. She married Lauri Lemberg, a playwright and the head of New York's Finnish labor theater. They had two children and worked at the Finnish-American labor theater in different parts of the country; first in Astoria and Seattle, then in Butte, Montana and finally in Chicago. A 1942 biography, which she helped to write, gives an ambivalent image of her experiences in the Finnish-American labor movement. On the one hand, she tells of friendship, love and shared enthusiasm for the labor theater and socialist ideals. Her biographer recounts how when she visited the homes of her Finnish friends in a town in Washington State she "never noticed that she was despised even though she was not part of the Mongolian race."[530] The community of other socialist Finns, who themselves were denigrated as radicals and "Mongolians," were able to offer Clay a refuge from the racism she faced from Americans, but also from other Finns.[531] On the other hand, Clay narrates how everywhere she lived there were always people who "made her feel as though she was a member of a contemptible and inferior race." Seattle was especially unwelcoming.[532]

530 Lindewall 1942, pp. 124–125.

531 In the late 1920s, when she joined the Seattle lodge of the conservative Knights of Kaleva, for example, her membership caused uproar and the lodge leader was forced to resign for allowing "a Negro woman" to join the organization. Kero 1997, p. 128.

532 Lindewall 1942, pp. 140–141. On Rosa Emilia Clay's life, see also Eva Erickson: *The Rosa Lemberg Story.* Tyomies Society: Superior, Wis. 1993;

Clay's experiences serve as a good illustration of how immigrant socialists – especially, it seems, in the Pacific Northwest, where a cross-national sense of whiteness among immigrants had already started to develop in the late 1800s[533] – shared a distinct color consciousness and thought of human phenotypical variance in terms of race.

Scholars of the racial socialization of European immigrants in the United States have acknowledged the profound impact that newspaper coverage of lynchings had on their ideas on race.[534] Yet, few have noted that many Europeans were well aware of lynching before their arrival in America. American telegraph reports and detailed newspapers stories of lynchings traveled across the Atlantic and even reached the remotest corners of the continent. In Finland, the expanding popular press of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took a keen interest in reporting these curious cases of publicized mob violence. In the 1870s, the word "lynching" (*lynchaus* or *lynkkaus*) was already adopted in Finnish as one of the first American loan words.[535] One Finnish journalist reflected in 1894 that his newspaper "often reported of these lynchings […] but if we would report on every case that the American newspapers bring to our attention, we would have at least two or three lynching stories in every issue. They are, we can say, almost everyday occurrences in America."[536] Other representations of lynchings also made their way to Finland. In the emerging U.S. popular culture, the white public's fascination with spectacular violence was commercialized in the form of photographs,

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Tanja N. Aho: "Rosa Lemberg: A 'Tragic Mulatta' Goes Transnational." In Uno J. Hebel (ed.): *Transnational American Studies.* Universitätsverlag Winter: Heidelberg 2012, pp. 355–374.

533 Chang 2012.

534 Zecker 2013, pp. 12–49; Vellon 2017, pp. 79–103.

535 Keijo Virtanen: *Atlantin yhteys. Tutkimus amerikkalaisesta kulttuurista, sen suhteesta ja välittymisestä Eurooppaan vuosina 1776–1917*. SKS: Helsinki 1988, p. 227.

536 "Neekerimurhat Amerikassa", *Uusi Savo*, 16.6.1894.

short movies and phonograph records.[537] At least the movies also found an intrigued audience in Finland. In 1909, a Helsinki movie theater promoted an "exciting" film entitled "American lynching or Racial hatred" at the top of its billing. It was advertised as a movie "that no one should miss."[538]

Most newspaper articles about lynching in the Finnish press were short wire-service reports that were translated directly from American newspapers – sometimes via German, Swedish, British, Finnish-American, or Swedish-American newspapers.[539] Thus, they reproduced a form of report about lynching that had become standardized in the 1890s in American newspapers. Grace Elizabeth Hale has noted that "Beginning in the 1890s, no matter the specific characteristics, representations of spectacle lynchings increasingly fell into a ritualistic pattern as the narratives constructed by witnesses, participants, and journalists assumed a standardized form."[540] As Finnish newspapers picked up on and translated these routinized depictions of lynching, the growing readership of Finnish newspapers became well acquainted with a standardized narrative: white citizens taking vengeance on bestial black criminals in an attempt to protect dishonored white womanhood. In one typical example of such a story, an Iisalmi-based newspaper reported on a 1903 lynching in Devon, West Virginia,"the cruelest lynching," it assured its readers, "that is known to have taken place in the United States." The coverage of the lynching started by foregrounding the alleged crime of the

537 Amy Louise Wood: *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940.* The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill 2009, pp. 71–176.

538 *Helsingin Sanomat*, 25.3.1909; 28.3.1909. On lynching movies, see Wood 2009, pp. 115–145.

539 For a reference to a Swedish-American newspaper as a source for lynching news, see "Ett och annat." *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 2.2.1899; for a reference to German-language newspapers as a source, see "Walkoisten hirmukohtelu mustia wastaan Amerikassa", *Hämeen Sanomat*, 14.6.1894; "Amerikansk lynchrättwisa", *Vasabladet*, 19.1.1899.

540 Grace Elizabeth Hale: *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South.* Vintage Books: New York 1998, p. 206.

person who was lynched – the rape of a 14-year-old white girl – as an indisputable fact and as background for understanding the cruel punishment that followed. A "crowd of people" had then apprehended the perpetrator and methodically tortured him before burning him alive and distributing his body pieces to onlookers as souvenirs. As usual, the methods of torture were described in painstaking detail.[541]

Lynching stories of this kind educated Finnish readers about the gendered logic of racial mob violence in America. As most of the more brutal spectacle lynchings were committed against black men accused of sexually assaulting white women, Finnish readers came to associate brutal violence against black men with sexually violent behavior. In one lynching story, for example, a Swedish-language newspaper in Tampere told of a Texas lynching in the following manner: "a Negro, who had raped the underage daughter of a farmer, has been, *as one can expect*, lynched in the most repulsive manner."[542] Whether a direct translation from English or not, the bridging of "rape" and "lynching" with the phrase "as one can expect" speaks volumes of the ways in which the standardized format of lynching stories informed Finns about the peculiar, taken-for-granted connections between gender, race and mob violence in the United States. A repugnant lynching was a punishment befitting an even more repulsive crime.

As Finns started to arrive in the United States *en masse* in the 1870s, stories of lynching, which had been read in Finnish newspapers, were one of their key initial reference points vis-à-vis knowledge of American racial relations. One Finnish migrant, for example, wrote a letter to a Finnish newspaper in 1893 in which he stated the following: "When I was still living in my homeland, I often read from newspapers about American lynching stories, how men in masks had cajoled people into some distant place in the middle of the night and then murdered them without mercy, or how an enraged mob attacked a jailhouse, robbed a jailed

541 "Kamala 'kansantuomio' Yhdysvalloissa", *Salmetar*, 19.8.1903. The same story was also published in many other Finnish newspapers.

542 "Om en ohygglig lynching", *Tammerfors*, 23.8.1894. Italics added.

criminal and hanged him from the nearest lamppost."[543] In one harrowing letter, the writer described in detail his participation in "a hanging of a Negro" and noted that an actual lynching – a quiet and orderly affair, the writer assured – was nothing like the "awful stories that we have previously read."[544] Robert Zecker has suggested that the coverage of lynchings by immigrant newspapers helped to normalize anti-black violence as a generic part of everyday life in their new homeland.[545] While immigrant newspapers certainly played such a role, the wide coverage of lynching in European newspapers suggests that many readers of the immigrant press might have already learned to associate it with America before their arrival.

Finnish-American immigrant newspapers published similar wire-service reports on their front pages as other contemporary American and European newspapers. They were often direct translations from English, reporting matter-of-factly that a *neekeri* ("a Negro") had been lynched for raping a white woman or for some other transgression. The crime was usually presented as a fact, sometimes with lurid details. Moreover, the horrid lynching, with its accompanying torments, was described as a fitting punishment for the crime.[546] This was as true of leftist papers as it was of conservative. In their editorial comments, however, both conservative and leftist papers were harshly critical of lynching. The conservative papers saw the practice as un-Christian and uncivilized,[547] while the leftist press sought to explain the violence as part of broader capitalist oppression of workers. While atavistic

543 "Leski ja korkuri. Lynkkausjuttu Ameriikasta", *Päivälehti*, 11.11.1893.

544 "Lännen raakalaiset. Neekerin hirttäminen." *Louhi,* 30.8.1893; *Keski-Suomi*, 2.9.1893; *Mikkeli*, 9.9.1893.

545 Zecker 2013.

546 On these kinds of wire service reports in labor newspapers, see "Hirttivät neekerin." *Raivaaja*, 18.7.1908; "Etelän rotusota." *Raivaaja*, 18.7.1908; "Lynchausvimma etelän valtioissa." *Työmies*, 4.8.1908.

547 On editorial commentary on racial violence in the conservative Finnish-American press, see, for example, "East St. Louisissa." *Päivälehti*, 5.7.1917.

racial sentiments might have been the superficial reason for the violence, the real reasons were to be found in the economic base structure.

After a lynching of two men in Cairo, Illinois, in November 1909, for example, the editor of *Työmies*, John Välimäki, examined the deed as a reflection of a political struggle in the city. Racial hatred was used by competing sections of the bourgeoisie to buttress their own political interests. Furthermore, the ignorant common folk, unable to rise above their base instincts, took the bait. Racial hatred in itself was an ancient sentiment, Välimäki noted, but only calculated political incitement could fuel the flames.[548] The commentary on Leo Frank's lynching in Georgia in 1915 blamed the capitalist press for inciting anti-Semitic hatred in order to sell papers. The editors of the Wisconsin-based *Työmies* argued that it was a toxic mix of a profit-motivated capitalist press and Georgia's "cowboy Yankeeism" (*lehmäpoikajänkkeys*) that had led to the brutal murder.[549]

As the reference to "cowboy Yankeeism" suggests, lynchings were also commonly interpreted as a demonstration of American – not just the southern bourgeoisie's – depravity. That deeds so repulsive could take place in twentieth-century America and be at least silently accepted by the country's political and religious establishment was a serious indictment against America's claim to civilization. One 1911 article that covered a lynching of three black farmers in Tennessee, for example, bemoaned how the "barbarity of the white-skinned" had reached its peak: "And this is happening among civilized Americans in the twentieth century!"[550] Commenting on an Illinois lynching in 1909, a *Työmies* editorial lamented how such a deed could happen "not in Africa or Russia, but in one of the most 'civilized' states in America."[551] It was thus not merely ignorant southern farmers or the mischie-

548 J[ohn] V[älimäki]: "Politiikka ja lynkkaukset." *Työmies*, 11.12.1909.

549 "Rotuvihasta johtuva raakuus ja kataluus." *Työmies*, 19.8.1915.

550 "Valkoihoisten raakalaisuus huipussaan." *Työmies*, 8.12.1911.

551 J[ohn] V[älimäki]: "Politiikka ja lynkkaukset." *Työmies*, 11.12.1909. See also "Amerikalaista raakalaisuutta." *Raivaaja*, 27.5.1911.

vous southern bourgeoisie that was to blame for the brutal violence, but the whole of American civilization.

The rhetoric that framed lynching as an exceptionally American crime was not the making of Finnish-American socialists. Since the 1880s, black anti-lynching activists had depicted lynching as a uniquely American crime – not just a southern curiosity, as contemporaneous white American commentary often suggested. Ida B. Wells, for instance, frequently indicted all white Americans for allowing the brutal practice to go on. During her stay in London in the 1890s, Wells wrote and lectured widely on lynching as a particularly American crime and as a demonstration of Americans' lack of civilization. This framing worked well among European journalists and Wells' message traveled into the far reaches of the continent. In 1894, a newspaper in southern Finland published Wells' interview with a German reporter in which she refuted white American mythologies of lynching as protection of white womanhood and depicted it as a reflection of an atavistic American racial hatred against their black compatriots. The article commended Wells for "her great service to humankind in bringing her black nationality's sad fate in front of the moral tribunal of civilized Europe."[552] The NAACP's anti-lynching rhetoric also picked up on this framing in the early 1900s and used it in their international lobbying. The organization sought to create foreign pressure for federal anti-lynching legislation. In the early decades of the 1900s this framing gradually moved from the black press and activism to white liberal and leftist politics. The white press eventually came to agree that lynching was a savage practice, which brought America's claims to civilization into stark relief. That white liberals and leftists largely came to share the black activists' frame of reference on lynching is, as historian Christopher Waldrep has argued, a testament to the oft-ignored agency of black Americans in U.S. history.[553]

552 "Walkoisten hirmukohtelu mustia wastaan Amerikassa." *Hämeen Sanomat*, 14.6.1894.

553 Christopher Waldrep: "Lynching 'Exceptionalism': The NAACP, Woodrow Wilson, and Keeping Lynching American." In *Globalizing Lynching Histo-*

The impact of black anti-lynching activism on the Finnish radical press was usually indirect (through socialist or liberal American newspapers, for example), but there are some instances that illustrate a more direct influence. After the black civil rights activist Mary Church Terrell visited Berlin's International Women's Congress in June 1904, a Finnish socialist magazine, which was also read in America,[554] carried a broad article on her criticism of lynching in America. The journalist Veikko Palomaa, who had himself lived in in the United States, noted that he was skeptical of the oft-repeated explanation that economic conditions alone explained the culture of violence in America. He pointed rather towards the seething racial hatred of Americans of which lynching was the most repellant example. Palomaa quoted Terrell's article in the *North American Review* in order to deny the common myth that lynchings were the result of black men's sexual violence against white women. Most victims of lynching were accused of no crime. Moreover, it was usually black women who suffered from sexual violence in the United States from white men, yet this violence went unpunished. This racial hatred was a stain on all Americans, Palomaa argued, and noted that America could claim its position among civilized nations only when it abolished the horrid crime of lynching and compensated black Americans for their unpaid labor during slavery.[555]

Yet, lynching not only called American civilization into question, but the whole notion of the Christian world's purported superiority. In the early 1900s, the socialist press was engaged in a heated debate with religious Finnish Americans, and the brutal lynch violence committed in America's most devoutly Chris-

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ry: Vigilantism and Extralegal Punishment from an International Perspective. Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke 2011, pp. 35–51.

554 On its front page, the magazine listed subscription prices in both Finnish Marks and U.S. Dollars.

555 [Veikko Palomaa]: "Mitä 'vapaassa maassa' tehdään?" *Työmiehen Illanvietto: Suomen Työväen Viikkolehti.* No. 30, 1904, pp. 233–234. For Terrell's *North American Review* article on which Palomaa drew, see Mary Louise Terrell: "Lynching from a Negro's Point of View." *North American Review*, Vol 178, June 1904, pp. 853–868.

tian regions could be used as a weapon in these debates. When a Finnish-American conservative newspaper bemoaned the degrading influence of socialism on Finns, the editor of *Toveritar*, Selma McCone, replied by bringing up the May 1916 lynching of Jesse Washington in Waco, Texas, as an example of the barbarity of Christian civilization. Citing *The Crisis*'s report on the event, McCone recounted how "a young Negro boy had violated a white woman" and how he had then become the victim of "white Christians'" barbarous torment. She listed the gruesome details of Washington's murder and noted how the macabre event had been attended by thousands of Christian men, women and children who treated it as amusing entertainment and who bought body parts of the victim as souvenirs. McCone noted how these savage residents of Waco were served by sixty-three churches and a Biblical school for its 26,000 citizens. It was true, McCone remarked, that socialists were indeed in favor of abolishing this savage brand of Christianity and replacing it with "a societal system that the Goddesses of virtue would not have to abhor."[556]

While the socialist coverage of lynching challenged American and Christian claims to civilization, thereby inverting the hegemonic notion of white or Western superiority, it often ended up reproducing the global hierarchy of civilization it sought to contest. In this hierarchy, the "savages" of Africa and "barbarians" of Asia often served as the standard of uncivility and brutality. In Finnish labor papers, the critics of lynching in the U.S. frequently wondered how such brutalities happened "not in Africa or Russia," but in supposedly civilized America.[557] They also noted that even the brutalities committed by "so-called savage peoples" or the Turks against the Armenians paled in comparison to Americans' brutishness.[558] Peter Vellon has noted that the coverage of lynching in Italian-American newspapers also relied on the idea of savage Africa: "In a scathing indictment of American lawless-

556 Selma [McCone]: "Kahvi-juttuja." *Toveritar*, 25.7.1916.

557 J[ohn] V[älimäki]: "Politiikka ja lynkkaukset." *Työmies*, 11.12.1909.

558 [Veikko Palomaa]: "Mitä 'vapaassa maassa' tehdään?" *Työmiehen Illanvietto: Suomen Työväen Viikkolehti*. No. 30, p. 233.

ness, African 'savagery' was held as the standard against which to judge American society."[559] Thus, while seeking to invert the civilizational dichotomy that privileged the West over the rest, socialist coverage of lynching often reproduced the idea of African and Asian barbarity. Being compared to African savages or Asiatic barbarians was considered an unparalleled indictment of white Americans' claim to civilization.

Thus, the early twentieth-century interpretations of lynching of Finnish-American radicals were a complicated matter. Direct translations of lynching reports from American newspapers ensured that radicals were familiar with the peculiar racial and gendered logics of American mob violence and with the stereotypical portrayals of black men as impulsive criminals. Contemporary Finns became acutely aware of the nature of lynching as a mass entertainment event for Americans through the consumption of newspaper reports and other representations (postcards, movies, etc.). In these portrayals, lynchings were staged as performances with elaborate rituals, including prolonged torture, painful killing and the gathering of souvenirs by the crowd. Still, ideas regarding European moral superiority over America, anti-chauvinist socialist internationalism and anti-lynching activists' counter-narratives provided alternative ways in which to interpret stories of lynching. In the early years of the twentieth century, lynching was something Finnish socialists considered rather distant from their own social world and something they could use to indict enemies: ignorant southerners, bourgeois Americans and hypocritical Christians. As anti-black violence started to become more prominent in the north, and as its perpetrators became the purportedly civilized white American workers of the North, this distancing of lynching became more difficult.

559 Vellon 2017, p. 37.

3.2. Limits of Economic Determinism: Explaining Race Riots

In December 1909, the editor of *Työmies* noted a disconcerting shift in the coverage of lynching by the American press. The editor noted that "American newspapers carry almost three or four stories of Negro lynchings every day." Yet, whereas almost all wire-service reports had previously been sent from the South, readers now read of lynchings in states like Illinois and Indiana. The editor lamented that the "habit from barbarian times" was spreading north.[560] Indeed, as the migration of black southerners to northern industrial cities increased in the early decades of the twentieth century, the geographical concentration of anti-black violence also changed. Lynching had never been an entirely southern phenomenon,[561] but the overwhelming majority of incidents were committed there – even in the 1920s and 1930s.[562] However, in the early twentieth century, and especially during and immediately after the First World War, anti-black vigilantism also spread to northern cities in the form of so-called race riots. The character of these riots varied – some were akin to actual riots, with forceful black self-defense against white assaults, but many resembled pogroms in which "groups of hysterical white people performed the violence, and groups of black people and their property caught the violence."[563]

The question of the Socialist Party's approach to the so-called Negro question has been a point of some contestation among historians. In earlier scholarship, epitomized by Ira Kipnis' *The American Socialist Movement* and Philip Foner's *American Socialism and Black Americans*, the Socialist Party's policies of race have

560 J[ohn] V[älimäki]: "Politiikka ja lynkkaukset." *Työmies*, 11.12.1909.

561 Michael Pfeifer: "Introduction." In Michael J. Pfeifer (ed.): *Lynching Beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence Outside the South.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana 2013, pp. 1–17.

562 Brundage 1993, p. 8.

563 Jan Voogd: *Race, Riots, and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919.* Peter Lang: New York 2008, p. 2.

been equated with myopic economic determinism. This approach is often associated with the party's long-time leader and presidential candidate, Eugene V. Debs, who in an oft-quoted 1903 essay argued that the Socialist Party had "nothing special to offer the Negro." Aside from a small but isolated coterie of left-wing socialists, the white socialists deemed America's race problem to represent only a small part of a wider class problem, which would automatically be solved when socialism was realized in the country. Thus, to liberate themselves, black Americans simply needed to comprehend the commonality of interests they shared with the white working class. According to the traditional view, this myopia largely explains why socialists never made much headway among black Americans.[564]

More recently, however, this view has been criticized. Critics have argued that Foner's reading of the Socialist Party's racial policies, in particular, reflects his Communist partisanship, reiterating, as it does, much of the CPUSA's accusations against its Socialist rival in the 1930s. Critics have argued that Foner decontextualizes Debs's analysis of race. The Debsian view has been treated ahistorically as economic reductionism *par excellence*, even though his economism and evolutionism were far from unique in the era in which he wrote. At the time, for example, W.E.B. Du Bois shared with Debs a preoccupation with economic analysis and the language of evolutionist optimism. The Socialist Party's analysis of race was not, then, as uniquely economist, or as deaf to contemporary criticism of racial discrimination, as has been traditionally held.[565] Still, there is little denying that Debs's racial progressivism also met strong resistance within the party in which "social equality" remained anathema, especially in the Southern sections. Jack Ross's comparison of the Socialist Party's policies on race to the policies of Nehru's Congress Party on caste

564 Kipnis 1952, p. 260; Foner 1977.

565 William P. Jones: "'Nothing Special to Offer the Negro': Revisiting the 'Debsian View' of the Negro Question." *International Labor and Working Class History,* No. 74, No. 1, 2008, pp. 212–224; Ross 2015, pp. 61–64.

is apt: both opposed the discriminatory status system and wanted it abolished, but were willing to do little to correct its legacy.[566]

Prior to the Socialist Party's first congress in Indianapolis in 1901, socialists in the United States had had relatively little to say about the so-called Negro question. After Emancipation, even those socialists who had been vocal abolitionists more or less lost interest in the plight of black southerners. In the 1870s and 1880s a growing consensus emerged within the emerging U.S. socialist movement whereby the race question was deemed to be subservient to the class question.[567] The Socialist Party was the first U.S. socialist organization to develop an analysis of racial oppression as a specific kind of ill. At its first convention in Indianapolis in 1901 the delegates heatedly debated whether they should pass a separate resolution on the Negro question. Morris Hillquit and many others argued that a special resolution would fly in the face of socialist universalism. Hillquit argued that there was no more reason "for singling out the negro race especially […] than for singling out the Jews or Germans or any other race, nationality or creed here present."[568] William Costley, one of the three black delegates present, had a different opinion. He argued that "the Negro as a part of the great working class occupies a distinct and peculiar position in contradiction to other laboring elements in the United States." Costley felt that since black workers were forced by capitalism to accept lower wages and to work longer hours than white workers, and since they faced specific torments, such as lynching, they represented a specific class of workers that was not only oppressed by white capitalists, but also by white toilers. The party convention sided with Costley over Hillquit: a separate resolution on the Negro question was carried, although it was watered down to a significant degree. [569]

566 Ross 2015, p. 64.

567 Foner 1977, 13–93.

568 Quoted in Foner 1977, p. 96.

569 Foner 1977, p. 99.

The question of whether the oppression of black people was merely a part of broader workers' oppression, or whether it had specific, racial dimensions was to remain at the center of the discussions on race in the Socialist Party and among the broad Left in the early twentieth century. Economic reductionism was not, however, the most compromising aspect of socialists' policy towards black Americans. In their preoccupation with the economic dimensions of oppression they were hardly unique for their time – the economic situation was also at the forefront of the thinking of many black civil rights activists. More problematic, however, were the socialists who traded in racist stereotypes about black inferiority. There was a vocal section within the Socialist Party that not only belittled the significance of black oppression, but also explicitly subscribed to notions of racial inequality. The arch-exclusionist Congressman Victor Berger, for example, was a vehement advocate of white supremacy. For him, the race question was not even a class question, but one of biology. He argued that the black worker was "a natural scab" and thus inherently unorganizable, which legitimized the labor unions' racially exclusive recruiting policies. William Noyes, another socialist believer in innate racial inequality, argued in the *International Socialist Review* in 1901 that since "the negroes are as a race repulsive to us," it was entirely natural for socialists to "sympathize with the common dislike of them." The socialists' failure to make any significant gains among black Americans was not, then, merely due to overt economism, inattention, or lack of effort. It was also because many members actively sought to keep the party as an exclusively white association.[570]

To be sure, while explicit defenders of biological determinism were in the minority, the Socialist Party's overall timidity on the race question often made it a *de facto* defender of segregation. Socialist politicians were often adamant that they were merely calling for political and economic, not social, equality between white and black workers. In the South, especially, "social equality" was a code for interracial sexual relations. Here, socialists were afraid

570 Quoted in Foner 1977, p. 106.

that they would lose the vote of white workers if socialism was equated with lax interracial sexual politics. The journalist Julius Wayland, who wrote for *Appeal to Reason*, the most influential socialist newspaper, even argued that the ideals of segregationism were best achieved in socialism, where workers got to decide with whom they wanted to work, live and socialize. Most would opt for their own kind, which would in effect result in exclusively black and white cities and work places, a situation that was purportedly preferred by both races.

The party's timidity was perhaps most conspicuous on the question of lynching. To be sure, the socialist press was critical of lynching and other forms of vigilante justice against blacks. When in July 1903 the U.S. government, for example, condemned the Chisinau pogroms in Tsarist Russia, the *Appeal to Reason* published an article entitled "The American Kishineff," equating anti-Semitic violence in Russia with anti-black lynching in America. In effect, the newspaper called out the U.S. government for its hypocrisy.[571] The tensions in the SPA's approach on lynching were illustrated, however, in the party's response to an inquiry of the International Socialist Bureau following the Chisinau massacre. The Brussels-based bureau inquired about the policy on lynching of its U.S. affiliate and received a response that illustrates the party's tortured approach to the question. The resolution adopted by the National Quorum, headed by Victor Berger, condemned "the frequent lynchings" in the United States and blamed capitalism for their instigation. Capitalism not only fueled the "race hatred" that led to anti-black attacks, but was also responsible for creating the vile criminals who were targeted by the vigilantes. The resolution stated that only the abolition of capitalism and the introduction of socialism would "provide the conditions under which the hunger maniacs, kleptomaniacs, sexual maniacs and all other offensive and lynchable human degenerates will cease to be begotten or produced."[572] As Philip Foner has noted, the res-

571 Foner 1977, pp. 106–107.

572 Quoted in Foner 1977, p. 126.

olution's logic was problematic on many counts. It accepted the highly contentious notion that the lynched victims were actually guilty of the crimes they were accused of, and that only socialism would create the conditions whereby such "lynchable human degenerates" would disappear. Until then, apparently, there was nothing that could be done to stop the attacks. The murky resolution had the fingerprints of Victor Berger all over it, but the fact that it could pass unopposed illustrates how little the party was concerned about anti-black violence.[573]

The Finnish labor press did not conduct debates on black inferiority or "social equality," but the white supremacist tendencies within the Socialist Party also left their mark on the Finnish organizations. In Clarksburg, West Virginia, the local Finnish Socialist Federation branch limited its membership to "all white persons of every nationality."[574] To be sure, this formulation was exceptional, as the by-laws of the federation usually limited membership on linguistic grounds to Finnish-speaking workers. That such a racially exclusionist formulation could be endorsed in West Virginia apparently unopposed still illustrates how Finnish socialists were far from being immune to the white supremacist tendencies within the broader American movement.

What perhaps eased the reception of such exclusionist ideas was the way in which many Finnish socialists conceived of human evolution. As Mark Pittenger has noted, American socialists were heavily invested in evolutionary theory. Indeed, evolutionary language provided them with a vocabulary to understand societal developments.[575] Finnish socialists were also interested in evolution: labor newspapers published stories on evolutionary theory and the Work Peoples College and other educational institutions provided education on the subject. Labor papers also occasional-

573 Foner 1977, p. 126.

574 "By-laws of the Clarksburg Finnish Socialist Local", 6/7/1913 in The Finnish Workers' Federation of the United States, New York Records, Finnish American Collection, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.

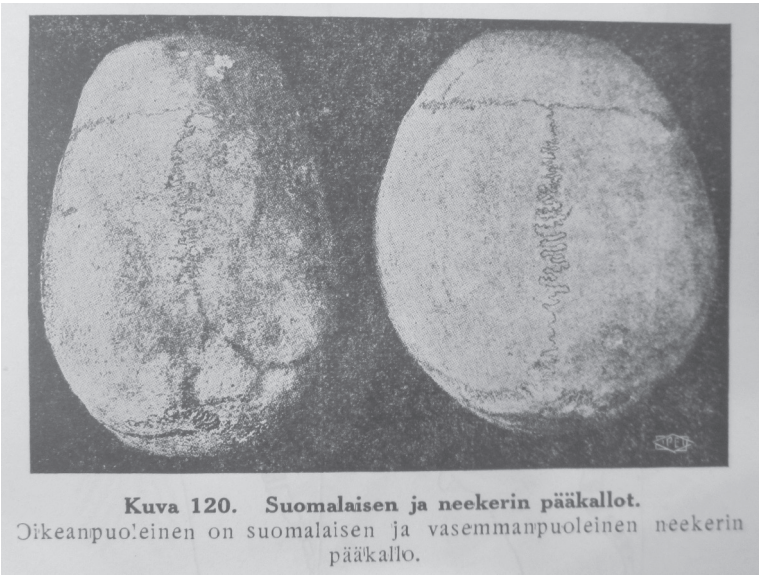
575 Pittenger 1993.

ly published articles on racial science on their pages.[576] The way in which the teaching of evolutionary theory could pass on racist ideas about differential racial development is illustrated by Moses Hahl's 1919 children's primer on evolutionary theory. The primer discussed the evolvement of human races as part of general natural evolution, presenting the existence of six races as a fact: Australians, Africans, Bushmen, Eurasians,[577] Malayan-Polynesians and Americans. A seventh race, the indigenous people of the Polar regions, was so miniscule as to warrant no description. While Hahl's language aimed to provide a neutral description, it was permeated with an understanding of racial hierarchy, which ranked Australian Aboriginals at the bottom and the "European civilized man" at the top. Most interestingly, the discussion of human races was coupled with a photograph of two skulls with an accompanying caption that read: "The skulls of a Finn and a Negro" (*Image 4*). What the reader was supposed to see in the image is not explicitly explained, but the fact that Finns and black Africans are depicted as entirely different races is apparent. The racial category of Finns is not explicitly stated, but since Hahl's categorization lumped Europeans and Asians into the same "Eurasian" group, the usual ambiguity regarding the position of Finns between Europe and Asia was solved. They were part of the "Eurasian" race, who, Hahl pointed out matter-of-factly, had larger brains than Africans.[578]

576 Köyhä p.: "Rodun heikkeneminen." *Työmies*, 11.10.1917. On discussions of evolutionary theory in the Finnish labor press, see, for example, "Nykyaikaisen perinnöllisyystutkimuksen merkitys yhteiskunnalliselta kannalta." *Työmies*, 3.3.1912; "Piirteitä ihmiskunnan kehityskulusta." *Työmies*, 15.8.1912; "Marksilaisuus ja darvinismi." *Sosialisti*, 17.12.1914; "Darwinin teoria ja luokkataistelu." *Sosialisti*, 17.2.1915; "Kehitysopin suhde tieteeseen." *Työmies*, 18.6.1915; "Materialistinen luonnonkäsitys." *Työmies*, 21.10.1915.

577 This race, it was noted, consisted of "five sub-races," of which the "Mongols" were the original race.

578 Moses Hahl: *Kehitysopin aakkoset. Ihanneliittokoulujen ylempiä luokkia ja kotiopetusta varten.* Amerikan suom. sos. kustannusliikkeet: Fitchburg 1919, pp. 172–174.



Kuva 120. Suomalaisen ja neekerin pääkallot.
Oikeanpuoleinen on suomalaisen ja vasemmanpuoleinen neekerin pääkallo.

Image 4: Image from Moses Hahl's 1919 primer on evolutionary theory. The caption reads: "The skulls of a Finn and a Negro. The skull on the right is a Finn's, and the one on the left is a Negro's." Source: Moses Hahl: Kehitysopin aakkoset. Ihanneliittokoulujen ylempiä luokkia ja kotiopetusta varten. Amerikan suom. sos. kustannusliikkeet: Fitchburg [1919], p. 103.

Daniel Bender has noted that pre-World War scholarly discourse on race and industry in the United States was "profoundly segregated." He notes that "It was a scholarship firmly and consciously about white workers, white immigrants, and the perceived threat of Asian migrants. African Americans were defined out of this discourse and designated – with the American Indian – for extinction."[579] Many socialists shared this racialized imagery of industrial society. Blacks were deemed a Tropical race, whose existence in industrial America was a historical anomaly. While many sympathized with the plight of blacks, few theoretically-minded socialists were interested in analyzing the issue in any

579 Bender 2009, p. 87.

great depth. It was considered a problem that was unrelated to their analysis of industrial America. Like Italian-American radicals, who could treat Asians as fellow workers, but who were more reserved in their calls for working-class solidarity with blacks or Native Americans,[580] Finnish socialists largely understood the so-called Negro question as a fringe working-class issue. Imagery of slavery was widely used as a metaphor for the plight of wage workers and socialist publications could publish accounts of slavery's history,[581] but there was little willingness to examine the contemporary position of black Americans.

A rare exception was Victor Ahola's essay on "the position of Negroes in the United States," which was published in *Työmies* in 1912.[582] Ahola was a student at the Work Peoples College, where he prepared his final thesis on the "Negro question." His *Työmies* essay was based on a presentation he had given at the College.[583] This essay illustrates the economist frame of reference that constituted the official view of Finnish socialists' on the question. In short, the race question was deemed to be a smaller part of a broader class question. In his essay, Ahola gave a broad historical overview of the transatlantic slave trade, the formation of slave societies in the Americas and the basics of slave economies. The majority of his essay dwelled, however, on the minute details of the exploitation of black farmers and workers in the contemporary South: the contours of the exploitative sharecropping and credit systems, the discriminatory wage system and the lack of access to economic resources, including education. The essay did not discuss lynching or white workers' racial chauvinism, and it ended in an appeal for black Americans to "awaken" and to

580 Vellon 2017.

581 See, for example, Aku Päiviö: "Jatkuva taistelu orjuutta vastaan." In *Köyhälistön Nuija V 1911*. Työmiehen Kustannusyhtiö: Hancock 1910, pp. 34–49.

582 Victor Ahola: "Neekerien asema Yhdysvalloissa." *Työmies*, 26.4.1912; 1.5.1912.

583 Yrjö Sirola: "Kertomus Työväenopiston toiminnasta lukuvuonna 1911–1912." *Työmies*, 12.6.1912.

join the Socialist Party as the only pathway to their salvation.[584] Ahola's essay closely reflected the Socialist Party's more general preoccupation with economic exploitation in their discussion of race. It thus worked to hide the specific forms of oppression, like lynching, that were meted out to black Americans. At the same time, this economic determinism provided a strong counterargument against the cultural and biological determinisms of the broader culture that explained the plight of blacks with reference to cultural backwardness and biological inferiority. Ahola explained the low educational level of blacks, for instance, with the economic necessity of child labor and lack of access to education, not with any reference to racial or cultural theories.[585]

The U.S. labor movement's position on these race riots was ambivalent. On the one hand, labor unions and leftist politicians were heavily invested in the racialized political cultures of northern industrial cities, which gave rise to the anti-black violence. Black migration from the South was framed by much the same rhetoric as Asian immigration in the West: backward and unorganizable migrants threatened to lower the standard of living of white workers. In the summer of 1917, for example, East St. Louis, Illinois, which was a major aluminum and steel manufacturing city at the time, saw one of the bloodiest anti-black pogroms in twentieth-century American history. Labor leaders were strongly implicated in these riots. The violence occurred in the midst of labor strife at the town's aluminum processing plants. These aluminum plants employed both white and black workers and used both white and black strikebreakers to crush strikes and root out incipient unionism. As the industrial actions escalated at the Aluminum Ore Company's plants in the spring and summer of 1917, the hatred of white workers was directed against black migrant workers, who they accused of breaking the strike. The violence first erupted in May, when a group of 3,000 white workers attacked a labor meeting of black workers, amid rumors that the

584 Victor Ahola: "Neekerien asema Yhdysvalloissa." *Työmies*, 26.4.1912; 1.5.1912.

585 Victor Ahola: "Neekerien asema Yhdysvalloissa." *Työmies*, 1.5.1912.

latter were socializing with white women. The riots continued in early July when white rioters rampaged in the city's black neighborhood, burning whole blocks and killing at least 100 black residents.[586]

As Charles Lumpkins has demonstrated, the Central Trades and Labor Union (CTLU) contributed heavily to the violence by channeling white workers' resentment towards black migrants, who were supposedly depriving white workers of employment and livelihoods. To strengthen their case against black labor, the labor leaders emphasized the detrimental effect of black migrants on the town's property values and crime rate, bringing middle-class whites on board the anti-black coalition. The labor leaders conveniently sidestepped the fact that white migrants far outnumbered the blacks in the town, and that white workers were also used as strikebreakers. Lumpkins notes that violent anti-black hatred among white workers was not spontaneous, but was a sentiment purposefully cultivated and intensified by a coterie of powerful white men: labor organizers, politicians and journalists.[587]

In explaining anti-black riots, Finnish socialist newspapers drew on the ideas that were circulating in the broader labor movement. The Finnish labor press still decried the "uncivilized" behavior of Americans, but the violence in the industrial north was harder to explain by reference to the ignorance and backwardness of the lynch law that held sway in the supposedly semi-feudal south. The white rioters in the north often hailed from the demographic most lionized in Finnish-American socialist literature: the organized, skilled, white and male industrial workforce. The socialist papers' coverage of the East St. Louis race riots in the summer of 1917 reflected this ambiguity. On the one hand, the violence was described with language familiar from the commentaries on lynching. The *Työmies* editors likened the violence to "events in 'the era of savagery' centuries ago,"[588] while

586 Charles L. Lumpkins: *American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot and Black Politics.* Ohio University Press: Athens 2008.

587 Lumpkins 2008, pp. 83–84.

588 "Raakalaisuutta." *Työmies*, 7.7.1917.

Raivaaja compared them to the anti-Jewish pogroms in Tsarist Russia.[589] However, since the rioters were unionized aluminum plant workers, it was hard to maintain the argument that backwardness alone was behind the violence. Indeed, both of the Socialist Party-affiliated newspapers lent some sympathy towards the economic frustrations that purportedly plagued the white rioters.

In making sense of the white rioters' motivations, the socialist newspapers accused greedy company bosses of importing cheap labor and thereby causing the understandable, if excessive, counter-reaction of the white labor force. *Raivaaja* noted in its coverage that organized workers in the city were upset that black workers had been brought in to lower their standard of living.[590] The Midwestern *Työmies* concurred: socialism condemned all racial violence, but if the American working class needed to resort to race riots in order to protect its economic interests, it was the greed of the capitalist class that was to blame.[591] The Midwestern newspaper asserted that it was testament to the success of company propaganda and a reflection of the false consciousness of white workers that they had violently targeted their black comrades, not the company bosses. Moreover, in an editorial *Työmies* remarked that "The word 'racial hatred' cannot in itself explain what has happened. Racial hatred is not some mysterious, inexplicable force of destiny that wildly rages at random. Even as a biological phenomenon, racial hatred has its material reasons in the distant past. And racial hatred's persistence can also be explained by material factors." The violence had erupted when local capitalists had sought to replace white workers with blacks, resulting in "ignorant" white workers taking out their hatred against blacks, letting the real culprits – company bosses – off the hook. The working-class cause, "if anything," was the real victim of the hor-

589 "St. Louisin häpeä on Yhdysvaltain häpeä." *Raivaaja*, 3.7.1917.

590 "Rotukahakat East St. Louis'ssa uusiutuivat." *Raivaaja*, 3.7.1917.

591 "Rotuvihaa herätetään." *Työmies*, 3.6.1917. See also "Rotusota St. Louis'ssa." *Raivaaja*, 7.6.1917; "Joukoittain neekereitä murhattu rotukahakoissa." *Työmies*, 4.7.1917.

rible events. The editors urged black and white laborers to work together to end capitalism and, with it, racial hatred.[592]

Thus, the socialist press deemed the rioters' grievances to be justified, but their anger misplaced. What gave this framework an especially murky character was the tacit, and, at times, explicit, understanding it lent to the white rioters: threatened with lowered standards of living, the white workers had reacted in the only way imaginable. That this reaction had assumed a racial, not a class, character was the fault of the employers, not the employees. In a certain sense, then, the Finnish-American socialist press can be faulted for its myopic economic determinism, which also plagued the broader American labor movement.

It is also true, however, that in a certain sense the socialists' myopia resulted from their *insufficient* appreciation of the economic context of the violence. Seeing racial hatred as a mere tool of capitalist exploitation, the editors failed to appreciate how race had been intertwined with economic class, and how racial violence could also serve the economic interests of white workers. Barbara Foley has argued that the U.S. Left in the twentieth century "should be faulted not for imposing *too rigid* a class analysis but for subscribing to, and acting on, an *insufficiently comprehensive and materialist* concept of class." Foley critiques the Socialist Party for taking too much of the contemporary U.S. political and economic discourse at face value. Since the socialists formed their analysis of wage work in terms of labor competition and did not question wage relations, as such, their understanding of racism's linkage to capitalism was therefore narrowed to a question of competition between black and white workers. Not only did this understanding accept the reified folk concepts of race at face value, but it also failed to grasp how capital accumulation was dependent on racism.[593] Indeed, the key failing in the coverage of Finnish socialist newspapers of the race riots was not economic

592 "Rotuviha." *Työmies*, 10.7.1917.

593 Barbara Foley: *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago 2003, p. 78. Italics are used in the original.

determinism as such. Rather, their myopic and often complacent treatment of the riots reflected an insufficient appreciation of how racial class was connected to economic class.

However, not all U.S. leftists shared this thinking on class and race. That economic determinism could be nuanced is demonstrated by the Wobbly commentary on the East St. Louis riots. Like its socialist rivals, the IWW organ *Industrialisti* had also decried the importation of black southerners by capitalists to work in northern industries during the war. The black migrants were deemed ignorant, easily manipulated and thus ideal strikebreakers, although the Wobbly newspaper was also quick to remind its readers that, exposed to industrial capitalism, black workers would not long remain in their backward state: they would become "just as rebellious as the white worker."[594] Commenting on the East St. Louis riots, *Industrialisti* saw the violence as having emerged from underlying economic conflicts, and faulted the city's white bourgeoisie for importing black migrants as cheap workers and as potential political tools.[595] In its editorial commentary, however, the newspaper was more specific and nuanced in its criticism. Rather than conjure up an ideal model of a working class that was unified in its interests, the Wobbly editors, drawing on their long-established criticism of traditional American craft union politics, noted that the U.S. working class was itself divided into different factions with differing economic interests. The white, native-born workers were intent on protecting their crafts from workers who they considered to be inferior: South and East Europeans, Asians and blacks. The craft unions had worked to intensify this anti-foreigner and anti-black sentiment and use it to their political and economic advantage. Unions were, then, not only interest groups for the economic elite of the working class; they also worked to safeguard the racial privileges of white, na-

594 "Neekereitä kuletetaan Chicagoon." *Industrialisti*, 12.3.1917.

595 "Rotusota jatkuu yhä St. Louisissa." *Industrialisti*, 4.7.1917.

tive-born, Americans against foreigners and those of a "foreign race."[596]

The riots in East St. Louis were, *Industrialisti* held, the result of an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the native-born working class, who both sought to hold on to their privileges against outside usurpers whose claim to equality was seen as illegitimate. The Socialist Party, which had failed to take a stand on immigrant exclusion and which harbored outright nativists among its leaders, was also implicated in inciting native-born American workers against foreigners and other "lesser" peoples. The Wobbly editors noted that "Everybody understands that a working-class movement that springs out of these conditions, and further intensifies them, is indirectly implicated in these acts of brutality." They concluded that as long as the AFL failed to reform itself, the union bosses should be considered "the main culprits in these massacres."[597] As Lumpkins's analysis of the origins of the East St. Louis riots illustrates, the *Industrialisti* editors were not far off the mark. The AFL-affiliated Central Trades and Labor Union was an important instigator of the violence in the Illinois city.[598]

The coverage of the race riots by the Finnish labor newspapers was, then, underpinned by a distinct economism. Yet, it is worth bearing in mind that this economism was expressed with different levels of nuance. Whereas the Socialist Party-affiliated newspapers viewed the participation of "ignorant" white workers in the riots as a reflection of their false consciousness, the Wobblies were less forgiving in explicating the rioters' motives: the mob members had acted out of economic self-interest and knew exactly what they were doing. To be sure, the Wobbly analysis can also be faulted for its insufficient appreciation of how profoundly racism shaped black Americans' economic, social and political exclusion. In conflating the interests of European immigrants and black Americans, and distinguishing the white, native-born,

596 "St. Louisin rotumellakat, Gompers ja Roosevelt." *Industrialisti*, 9.7.1917. See also "Roosevelt ja Gompers tappelussa." *Industrialisti*, 9.7.1917.

597 "St. Louisin rotumellakat, Gompers ja Roosevelt." *Industrialisti*, 9.7.1917.

598 Lumpkins 2008, pp. 83–84.

workers as their common oppressor, the Wobblies failed to acknowledge the differences in the positions of white immigrants and black workers within U.S. society. As anti-black violence and repression of political dissent intensified after the World War, alongside the demobilization of troops, the conflation between immigrant and black interests called for reconsideration.

3.3. Red Scare and Red Summer

Philip Foner has noted that 1919, the year after the end of World War I, was a "Red Year" in three senses: it saw the feverish anti-black violence of the Red Summer; it marked the intensification of the anti-radical Red Scare; and it witnessed the bitter break-up of the American Reds, who divided, roughly speaking, into two camps: socialists and communists.[599] Scholarship on the Finnish-American labor movement has extensively covered the "Red Year" in the latter two senses of the term. Scholars have noted the political repression of Finnish radicals during World War I and its aftermath, and examined in detail the internal split of the Finnish Socialist Federation when communists left and eventually joined the Workers (Communist) Party of the United States.[600] No historian has, however, assessed the responses of Finnish radicals to the "Red Year" in the first sense, that is, the year of the notorious Red Summer. This is understandable inasmuch as the race riots never figured prominently in the debates of Finnish-American radicals during the heated year of 1919. Much like the broader socialist movement in the U.S., Finnish socialists and communists were much too preoccupied with their internal squabbles to pay any extensive attention to the racial tensions that were tearing apart American cities.[601] Still, the race riots were far from ignored. Radicals understood that the white mobs that had wreaked

599 Foner 1977, p. 288.

600 Ross 1977, pp. 138–164; Kostiainen 1978.

601 Foner 1977, pp. 302–306.

havoc in Chicago and many other cities were related to the broader political developments under way in the United States and the world. For contemporaries who were assessing the tumultuous "Red Year," the three shades of red were blended into one.

Between May and September 1919, there were seven major race riots across the United States: Charleston, Longview (Texas), Knoxville, Omaha, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Elaine (Arkansas). In addition to these major altercations, there were at least thirteen smaller skirmishes between white and black rioters, as well as a number of lynchings. The reasons for the violence were complex. During the war, hundreds of thousands of black migrants had moved to northern cities in order to fill the gaps in the labor force brought on by the war. The arrival of migrants had already led to major altercations with white workers during the war – as the East St. Louis riot had testified – but the problems intensified after the demobilization of troops in 1918 and 1919. Black soldiers, who had served their country and become accustomed to the laxer racial mores of Europe, were frustrated to return to a country where they were still held in open contempt and even threatened with lynching if they wore their uniform in certain areas of the South. The ranks of the NAACP swelled during and after the war.[602]

Many white soldiers were also frustrated after demobilization, albeit for altogether different reasons. The northern veterans returned to cities that had seen significant demographic changes; many saw the black migrants as intruders who had stolen their jobs or pushed down wages. But their anxieties were not merely economic: black men, especially those who had served in Europe, were also perceived as a sexual threat. These white men feared that black veterans, who had become accustomed to the company of purportedly lax Frenchwomen, would also prey upon white women in the United States. These economic and cultural factors

602 William M. Tuttle, Jr.: *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana 1970; Foner 1977, pp. 288–290; Cameron McWhirter: *Red Summer: Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America.* Henry Hold and Company: New York 2011.

were a necessary condition for the break-up of race riots, but they do not provide an exhaustive explanation. The same conditions were also present in many other cities that did not see the tensions break out into open violence. In each of the riot locations there were also local political, demographic, economic and cultural factors that contributed to the fighting, looting and killing.[603]

The Finnish-American press was rather slow to react to the racial strife that was intensifying in the country, preoccupied as it was with the political repression of radicals, the heated labor struggles, such as the Winnipeg general strike and the internal squabbles of the socialist movement. Indeed, the race riots from May to early July went almost completely unnoticed by the Finnish radical press. It was only the major riots in Washington, D.C. on 20 July that attracted the attention of Finnish-American radicals to the racial strife in urban America.[604] Days later, when racial violence erupted in Chicago, the newspapers again reported the violence extensively and in even greater detail. At this point they also commented on the disconcerting trend of racial strife on their editorial pages.[605] *Työmies* even had its own correspon-

603 Lumpkins 2008, p. 3.

604 "Rotukahakoita Washingtonissa." *Raivaaja*, 21.7.1919; "Sade keskeyttänyt rotukahakat Washingtonissa." *Raivaaja*, 22.7.1919; "Rotumellakoita Washingtonissa." *Työmies*, 22.7.1919; "Rotukahakoita pääkaupungissa." *Toveri*, 22.7.1919; "Rotukahakat Washingtonissa jatkuvat." *Raivaaja*, 23.7.1919; "Washingtonissa jatkuvat yhä rotumellakat." *Työmies*, 23.7.1919; "'Järjestystä' Washingtonissa." *Työmies*, 30.7.1919.

605 "Rotukahakoita Chicagon neekerialueilla." *Työmies*, 28.7.1919; "Rotukahakoita Chicagossakin." *Raivaaja*, 28.7.1919; "Neekereitä on tapettu Chicagossa." *Toveri*, 28.7.1919; "Rotutappelu käynnissä jo Chicagossa." *Industrialisti*, 29.7.1919; "Rotumellakat jatkuvat Winnipegissä [sic]." *Työmies*, 29.7.1919; "Raivoisia mellakoita Chicagossa." *Toveri*, 29.7.1919; "Chicagon rotutaistelut jatkuvat." *Raivaaja*, 29.7.1919; "Rotukahakat jatkuvat verisinä." *Raivaaja*, 30.7.1919; Chicagon mellakat kiihtyvät." *Toveri*, 30.7.1919; "Uhrien luku lisääntyy Chicagon rotumellakoissa." *Työmies*, 30.7.1919; "Rotutappelu yhä kärjistyy Chicagossa." *Industrialisti*, 30.7.1919; "Rotutaistelu vielä veristä Chicagossa." *Industrialisti*, 31.7.1919; "Sotajoukot rauhoittajina Chicagossa." *Toveri*, 31.7.1919; "Chicago julistettu sotalain alaiseksi." *Raivaaja*, 31.7.1919; "Chicagon rotukahakat ehkäistään." *Raivaaja*, 1.8.1919; "Sotaväki lopettanut Chicagon mellakat." *Toveri*, 1.8.1919;

dent in Chicago, who filed detailed reports of the violence for the newspaper.[606] Later in the summer, the newspapers continued their coverage and commentary as racial violence again broke out in Omaha.[607]

In explaining the violence to their readers, the labor newspapers mostly relied on the same economic framework that they had used to cover the East St. Louis riots two years earlier. Indeed, East St. Louis was a common point of reference in the commentaries. The West Coast *Toveri* was most wedded to this framework. According to an editorial in this newspaper, the riots were "the inevitable consequence of those practices that American capitalists use to get new labor to exploit." Like bosses in East St. Louis, Chicago industrialists had imported thousands of poor and ignorant black southerners to work in their factories and packinghouses, resulting in the resentment of white workers. Competition in housing markets amplified this resentment. The editors stated matter-of-factly that "Those of the white race do not want to live with Negroes," which is why property prices in black neighborhoods decreased. This infuriated the white house-own-

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"Ankara rotukahakka Chicagossa." *Työmies*, 1.8.1919; "Yksityiskohtaisia tietoja Chicagon rotukahakoista." *Työmies*, 2.8.1919; "Chicago on sotilasvalvonnan alaisena." *Työmies*, 4.8.1919; "Chicagon rotumellakat voidaan pitää loppuneena." *Työmies*, 5.8.1919; "Neekereitä asetettu syytteeseen Chicagossa." *Työmies*, 6.8.1919; "44 syytteeseen rotumellakoista." *Työmies*, 11.8.1919.

606 The correspondent filed four reports: "Ankara rotukahakka Chicagossa." *Työmies*, 1.8.1919; "Yksityiskohtaisia tietoja Chicagon rotukahakoista." *Työmies*, 2.8.1919; "Chicago on sotilasvalvonnan alaisena." *Työmies*, 4.8.1919; "Chicagon rotumellakat voidaan pitää loppuneena." *Työmies*, 5.8.1919.

607 "Kamala mellakka Omahassa." *Toveri*, 29.9.1919; "Kahdeksan ihmistä surmattu lynchauskahakassa." *Raivaaja*, 29.9.1919; "Omahassa edelleen levotonta." *Toveri*, 30.9.1919; "Jälkitietoja Omahan lynchauskahakasta." *Raivaaja*, 1.10.1919. Other race riots of the Red Summer received more limited coverage in the Finnish-American labor press. See "Rotukahakan alkuja Trentonissa." *Raivaaja*, 5.8.1919; "Rotukahakka Elainessa Arkansasissa." *Toveri*, 2.10.1919; "Rotusodan mieshukka on suuri." *Toveri*, 3.10.1919; "Rotusota yhä jatkuu Arkansasissa." *Toveri*, 4.10.1919.

ers in these areas. That economic resentment had been funneled into anti-black racial violence was something characteristically American, the editors decried, but the economic strife in labor and housing markets was still believed to be the underlying reason behind the riots.[608] *Toveri*'s economism was complemented with the cultural denunciation of black southerners. Black southerners who had "invaded" sections of South Chicago had turned "some of the cleanest" parts of the city into disrepair, thereby infuriating white residents. "It is also said," *Toveri* averred, "that the newly-arrived Negroes are worse than those who have lived in Chicago for a longer time."[609] The West Coast newspaper's coverage of the Chicago riots provides a good illustration of how the reduction of racial violence to mere labor competition often took for granted the racial stereotypes used to justify the violence.

Other labor newspapers also discussed the race riots within this economist framework. A Chicago correspondent for *Työmies* reported that it was "crystal clear capitalists have played a devilish role in this massacre" by importing black southerners as strikebreakers and using the ignorance of workers to incite racial hatred.[610] *Industrialisti* contended that racial violence served the purposes of the bourgeoisie since it kept the working class divided – this was why the bourgeois press did not want to explain the true, economic reasons behind the violence.[611] But the editors of *Työmies* and *Raivaaja* were also more attuned to other explanatory factors. Examining the details of the violence, it was hard to maintain a stance that argued that economic anxiety alone was the root of the bloody riot. In Chicago, the violence started on a Lake Michigan beach, where an altercation between white and black beach-goers culminated in a young black boy being stoned to

608 "Chicagon rotumellakat." *Toveri*, 1.8.1919. The article was also published in *Työmies*. See "Chicagon rotumellakat." *Työmies*, 12.8.1919.

609 "Chicagon mellakat kiihtyvät." *Toveri*, 30.7.1919.

610 "Chicago, Ill." *Työmies*, 1.8.1919. See also "Päivänkatsaus." *Raivaaja*, 1.8.1919; "Päivänkatsaus." *Raivaaja*, 30.9.1919.

611 "Rotutappelu käynnissä jo Chicagossa." *Industrialisti*, 29.7.1919.

death as he was swimming.[612] A columnist for *Työmies* bemoaned the curious logic of the color line: "A Negro goes swimming. A white man goes too. A line has been set up to separate the two. The Negro cannot cross this line, the white man can. The Negro had swum outside the line, on the white side. A war ensued: seven dead and forty wounded." For white Americans, it did not matter in the slightest that black people were "100% Americans from a bourgeois point of view." They had sent their boys to fight and die for America in the war, and were among the most conscientious of taxpayers. Still, if they erred by swimming on the wrong side of an imaginary line, a war was declared. The writer sardonically concluded that "This is the wonderful situation we have in the land of 'endless opportunity' and 'personal freedom.'"[613]

The East Coast *Raivaaja* also indicated that racial hatred was the most important reason behind the anti-black riots: "The reason for [the riots] is simple: the position of the black-skinned is the position of the downtrodden and oppressed." Not only were black people deprived of elementary civil rights, they were held in contempt in everyday social life, and not just in the south. That even "such a 'civilized' city as Chicago" held black people in contempt had been readily demonstrated by the riots, originating, as they had, from an altercation on a Jim Crow beach. What had changed since the war was that black people had gained a new sense of self-esteem and they were not willing to submit to their previous lot. The editor noted that "Radicalism has replaced the dullness of a Negro worker. They want to present themselves as humans in the company of whites, not as Negroes." Racial riots were a reflection of the resentment of ignorant and parochial white workers to the newly-acquired confidence of the "new Negroes." This resentment would not, however, halt the development of black workers' consciousness, which would continue to progress towards the realization of their common class interests

612 Tuttle 1970, pp. 3–8.

613 "Päivän pakinoita." *Työmies*, 30.7.1919.

with the white workers.[614] Rather than increased segregation, a unified interracial working-class movement was needed to resolve racial antagonism.[615]

The manner in which the *Raivaaja* writer (probably the newspaper's editor-in-chief Frans Syrjälä) referred to the discussions on the "new Negro" illustrates how Finnish radicals, especially those close to New York's radical scene, were at least partially attuned to the discourse on the "new Negro" that was emerging in *The Messenger* and among Harlem's small coterie of black socialists.[616] The radical press mostly drew on white experts (socialist activists, bourgeois newspapers) in their riot coverage, but black voices were not completely ignored. In a September editorial seeking to shed light on the reasons for the previous summer's race riots, for example, *Industrialisti* explained "what Negroes themselves are saying about the race riots." It described at length a speech that the civil rights activist William Monroe Trotter had delivered in Palace Theater in New York. Trotter had described the humiliations he had to endure in postwar America and had vowed that the black race would fight tooth and nail for justice and equal rights. Trotter was paraphrased as saying the following: "The black race has shown that its brains do not differ from the brains of whites, and if black people do not get the rights that belong to them, they will fight for them." The sympathetic treatment of the black activist's message was somewhat qualified by the editor's curt concluding line: "But it would be best if the black people would teach their children to also act in other ways."[617] While it is somewhat unclear what the editor meant by this comment, the patronizing tone comes across crystal clear.

The race riots of the Red Summer took place amidst major labor struggles, such as the Winnipeg general strike, a tram strike in Chicago and steel workers' strikes in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and

614 "Päivänkatsaus." *Raivaaja*, 29.7.1919.

615 "Päivänkatsaus." *Raivaaja*, 1.8.1919.

616 Foley 2003, p. 17-31.

617 E.N.: "Rotukahakoiden jälkimuistoja." *Industrialisti*, 20.9.1919; "17 neekeriä syytteeseen Chicagossa." *Industrialisti*, 7.8.1919.

other major manufacturing cities. Political dissent also faced an increasing crackdown, with immigrant radicals bearing the brunt of these attacks. During the summer of 1919 the Finnish-American press was preoccupied with covering these events, as well as the internal strife in the U.S. Socialist Party, which is why the race riots – while assiduously covered – were not a primary concern. That the radical newspapers' attention was mostly elsewhere was perhaps betrayed by a faux pas in a *Työmies* news report on the Chicago riots: the headline of a 29 July article asserted that "Race Riots Continue in Winnipeg."[618] At the time, Winnipeg was in the throes of a major general strike, which was being followed intently by the staff of *Työmies* throughout the summer. The error in the headline illustrates that race riots were not the most pressing issue for Finnish-American labor newspapers, but it also perhaps indicates how the radical journalists imagined the labor and racial strife formed part of the same crackdown against workers. Indeed, the radical press's commentary on the race riots often made this connection explicit. A *Toveri* editorial on the Chicago riots expressed concern that the violence now targeting black Americans could also easily be instigated against "immigrants of the white race,"[619] while the *Industrialisti* connected the race riots to the anti-IWW sentiment then gripping the nation.[620]

The severe political repression against leftist dissent in wartime and postwar U.S. society was especially harsh on immigrant radicals. Jack Ross notes that the war time's "merciless domestic terror" against American radicals was already "the worst in American history and the worst, save perhaps of the Tsarist Russia, of all the belligerents in the [World War]."[621] Finnish radicals, too, were targeted in this anti-radical crackdown: socialist halls were raided, newspapers were put under supervision and many activists were imprisoned. The *Toveri* newspaper came under especially

618 "Rotumellakat jatkuvat Winnipegissä." *Työmies*, 29.7.1919.

619 "Chicagon rotumellakat." *Toveri*, 1.8.1919; *Työmies*, 12.8.1919.

620 E.N.: "Rotukahakoiden jälkimuistoja." *Industrialisti*, 20.9.1919.

621 Ross 2015, p. xix. See also Foley 2003, pp. 122–158.

severe assault in November 1918.[622] The anti-radical crackdown only intensified after the war. Radical organizations were viewed as being conduits for revolutionary fervor on the other side of the Atlantic, with immigrants from Russia seen as an especially potent security threat. Indeed, the so-called Palmer Raids in November 1919 and January 1920, alongside the deportation of radical immigrants to Russia in December 1919, singled out these groups for special scrutiny.[623]

For many Finnish-American radicals, this federal assault formed part of a far wider, international counter-reaction by a regressive bourgeoisie against an ascendant proletariat. The Bolshevik Revolution and its spread to Finland had been enthusiastically followed in the Finnish-American labor press, but in the spring of 1918 this elation quickly turned sour. At this time, the revolution in Finland was violently quashed in the wake of a bitter civil war between the socialist Red Guards and the conservative White Guards. The conflict claimed some 39,000 lives, most of them on the defeated socialist side. The prominent role played by terror in the war increased the level of bitterness. While representatives of bourgeois society were severely targeted in the Red Terror, this paled in comparison to the White Terror that claimed the lives of at least 10,000 socialists and suspected sympathizers. Another

622 Hummasti 1979, pp. 123–133. Most of the newspaper's staff were arrested, with two –the editor-in-chief and the business manager – eventually sentenced to prison for libel and incitation. Seven Finnish Wobblies were also among the 166 members of the IWW that were charged with espionage and conspiracy against the state in the much-publicized Chicago trial of 1918. Leo Laukki, the long-time editor of *Industrialisti*, for example, received a 20-year sentence for espionage and conspiracy against the state. Laukki was, however, released on bail in the spring of 1919 and soon thereafter fled to Soviet Russia. See Ahola 1973, pp. 98–113.

623 See, for example, Douglas Ollila, Jr.: "Defects of the Melting Pot: Finnish-American Response to the Loyalty Issue, 1920–1920." In Pentti Virrankoski, Matti Lauerma, Kalervo Hovi & Keijo Virtanen (eds.): *Turun Historiallinen Aristo 31*. Vammalan Kirjapaino: Vammala 1975, pp. 397–413; Suzanne Matson: "The Liberty Committee: Finns, Sedition, and Montana Vigilantes during World War I." *Journal of Finnish Studies,* Vol. 13, No. 1, 2009, pp. 67–74.

12,000 Reds perished in prison camps after the war. Thousands of Reds escaped to Soviet Russia, where they established the Communist Party of Finland in exile, and participated in the Russian Civil War that raged well into the 1920s.[624] The Finnish Civil War and its aftermath were intently followed in America, and many Red refugees also ended up in Canada and the United States. The memory of the violent repression of the Finnish revolution would live long among Finnish-American socialists, and it contributed heavily to the radicalization of the movement in the interwar period. Communism became the strongest ideological current in the Finnish-American labor movement. As Auvo Kostiainen has noted, "the Civil War provided a continuous and uninterrupted supply of fuel for the growing left wing of the Finnish-American labor movement."[625]

It is small wonder, then, that some Finnish-American radicals interpreted mob violence in America through the framework of an international anti-worker assault. White violence in Finland against the Reds and white violence in America against blacks were for some a part of the same bourgeois counter-revolution. When a Chicago correspondent for *Työmies* witnessed the stabbing of an unarmed black man by a white mob during the Chicago riots in the summer of 1919, he interpreted the deed with language borrowed from the labor press's coverage of White Terror in Finland: "A mob holds the man still and one of them pushes a knife through his chest, and then the Mannerheimian

624 On the Finnish Civil War, see, for example, Risto Alapuro: *State and Revolution in Finland.* University of California Press: Berkeley 1988, pp. 150–196.

625 Kostiainen 1978, 58. On the Finnish-American labor movement and the Finnish Civil War, see Varpu Luodesmeri: "Amerikansuomalaisten työväenjärjestöjen suhtautuminen Suomesta vuoden 1918 sodan jälkeen tulleisiin siirtolaisiin: 'Hiljan Suomesta tulleitten tutkijakomiteat.'" *Turun Historiallinen Arkisto* 29, Turku 1974, pp. 63–113; Auvo Kostiainen: "The Tragic Crisis: Finnish-American Workers and the Civil War in Finland." In *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America.* Tyomies Society: Superior 1977, pp. 217–235.

deed had been done."[626] Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, who the writer referenced, was the military leader of the White Guards in Finland and for many Reds the chief culprit of the White Terror against Finnish workers. He gained an especially bad reputation in the Finnish-American communist press in the interwar-era, where he was constantly referred to as "Murderer Gustaf" (*Murha Kustaa*). The equation of Chicago's white mobs and Finnish White Guards is perhaps illustrative of a broader interpretative framework, which Finnish radicals used to interpret anti-black violence in America. The violence meted out against black Americans was seen as part of a wider bourgeois crackdown against working-class dissent in Europe and America.[627]

This interpretative framework encouraged a sense of interracial solidarity, but it also worked to hide the differences in position between white immigrant radicals and black Americans. The equation of anti-black pogroms with the anti-radical crackdown failed to note the systemic and sustained character of anti-black discrimination and oppression in the United States. As the comments of the editors of *Työmies* and *Raivaaja* on the Chicago riots suggest, there were Finnish socialist activists who also understood that the position of black Americans could not be easily equated with white immigrants. While the term "double oppression" was not yet explicitly invoked, there was a growing understanding that color was an axis of oppression that could not be entirely reduced to class. These tensions in the approach of Finnish-American radicals to racial violence came powerfully to the fore in June 1920, as anti-black violence reached the heart of Finnish America for the first time.

626 "Chicago, Ill." *Työmies*, 1.8.1919.

627 Much of the commentary on race riots expressed anxieties that racial violence could be extended to white immigrants. See "Chicagon rotumellakat." *Toveri*, 1.8.1919; *Työmies*, 12.8.1919.

3.4. The Duluth Lynchings of 1920

Minnesota is not usually associated with lynching, but four such hangings took place in the state in the twentieth century before the enactment of anti-lynching legislation in 1921.[628] In September 1918, a mob calling themselves the Knights of Loyalty tarred, feathered and lynched a Finnish dockworker, Olli Kinkkonen, who they suspected of anti-war agitation. Some two years later, in June 1920, a much larger mob lynched three black circus workers – Elmer Jackson, Elias Clayton and Isaac McGhie – in downtown Duluth in front of a cheering crowd of thousands. These two separate cases of lynch violence were widely covered by the local Finnish-American press, and they allow for a more detailed examination of the character of mob violence in America. How could anti-black violence be explicated and what was its relationship to the increasing bourgeois assault on immigrant radicalism?

The first lynching in Minnesota – the murder of Kinkkonen – took place amid the jingoistic fervor of World War I. Minnesotan state authorities had cracked down heavily on anti-war radicalism, especially targeting the immigrant-heavy membership of the IWW. Since Finns were prominently represented among Minnesotan radicals, and since Finnishness was still associated with radicalism in the state, Finnish immigrants suffered particularly heavy repression. Finnish socialist halls were raided, and the Work Peoples College near Duluth was vandalized. In September 1918, the Knights of Loyalty kidnapped Kinkkonen from a Duluth boardinghouse. His tarred and feathered body was found hanged in Duluth's Lester Park in October. The Finnish radical press saw the murder of Kinkkonen as part of the larger assault on anti-war workers, but noted that he was not a man especially noted for his activism. He had been a silent and conscientious dockworker who had been a union man, but was far from be-

628 Michael Pfeifer: "Appendix: Lynchings in the Northeast, Midwest, and West." In Michael J. Pfeifer (ed.): *Lynching Beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence Outside South*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana 2013, pp. 289–290.

ing an agitator. It might have been that the mob mistook Kinkkonen for some other, more vocal Finnish anti-war activist. The lynching of an unaffiliated Finnish dockworker illustrates how Finnishness was associated with unpatriotic radicalism among sections of Minnesota's more jingoistic inhabitants.[629]

The second case of lynch violence in Duluth took place on the evening of June 15, 1920, when a group numbering in the thousands stormed the city jail and then kidnapped three black men accused of raping a young white woman. The men were hanged from a lamppost in the center of Duluth in front of a crowd of some 10,000 people. The three lynchings shocked many in the state and the nation. While the Duluth lynching attracted widespread attention in the summer of 1920 and resulted in swift political action – the state of Minnesota enacted anti-lynching legislation in 1921 – the case has not attracted much attention from either historians of Minnesota or of lynching.[630]

The Duluth lynchings were something of an anomaly considering that many of the factors fueling racial violence in other parts of the industrial north were lacking in this northern Minnesotan town. Unlike Chicago, for example, Duluth was not a major destination of southern black migration during World War I and in the immediate postwar years. In 1920, Duluth had only 495 black residents, a measly 0.5% of the population. Moreover, this small population was not the result of a sudden inflow of

629 "Suomalainen mies tervattu Duluthissa." *Industrialisti*, 20.9.1918; "Olli Kinkkonen yhä kadoksissa." *Industrialisti*, 24.9.1918; "Lausui mielipiteensä." *Työmies*, 24.9.1918; "Rääkkääjäin uhri yhä kadoksissa." *Työmies*, 25.9.1918; "Olli Kinkkosen ruumis on vihdoin löydetty Lester-puistosta – hirtettynä." *Industrialisti*, 2.10.1918; "Hänet löydettiin hirttäytyneenä." *Työmies*, 2.10.1918; "Viranomaiset tutkivat murhajuttuja." *Työmies*, 3.10.1918; "Salaperäiset murhat." *Industrialisti*, 4.10.1918.

630 On Minnesotan historians' lack of attention to the case, see William D. Green: "Foreword." In Michael Fedo: *The Lynchings in Duluth.* Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2000, p. vii. The case has also not attracted much attention from historians of lynching. In a recent anthology on lynching in the North, the Duluth lynching goes unmentioned. See Pfeifer 2013a.

black migrants, but was a rather established community. In the decade prior to the lynchings the town had accrued only 85 new black residents.[631] Yet, while this numerical increase of blacks in Duluth was modest, the perception of black encroachment was apparently stark in the minds of the young and white residents of Duluth. The town's largest employer, U.S. Steel, had employed a small number of black migrants from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Georgia. This move was interpreted by the steel plant's white workers as an effort to break the unions. The number of black migrant workers was much too small to form a legitimate threat as an economic competitor, but it was probably the knowledge that black southerners had been used as strikebreakers in other Midwestern industrial localities that animated anxieties among the white workers of Duluth. The same gendered fear and hatred of black masculinity, which contributed to anti-black violence elsewhere in the country, was also present in Duluth.[632] Reflecting the intensifying anxieties over socialization between whites and blacks, many of Duluth's restaurants, hotels and theaters stopped serving black customers after the war or attempted to impose segregated seating.[633]

The Duluth lynchings of June 1920 occurred amidst this tense postwar atmosphere of racial strife. The train of events followed a standard routine: on the night of 14 June, a 19-year-old white woman and her white male companion filed a police report of sexual assault. They accused six black men, who were working at a circus that was visiting Duluth, of raping the woman at gunpoint.[634] The police quickly apprehended the men from the cir-

631 Toivonen 1997, p. 185. On Duluth's black community, see David Vassar Taylor: *African Americans in Minnesota*. Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2002, pp. 57–64.

632 Vassar Taylor 2002, pp. 60–61; Toivonen 1997, p. 185; Michael Fedo: *The Lynchings in Duluth*. Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul 2000, pp. 5–7.

633 Vassar Taylor 2002, p. 61.

634 Michael Fedo, the journalist who later investigated the case, considers it almost certain that the three men were innocent. Indeed, he suspects that the alleged rape never took place. The family doctor who examined

cus. As the rumors of the alleged rape spread on the morning of 15 June, young men from working-class West Duluth started to gather at the downtown jailhouse, demanding that the black men be handed over to the crowd. By evening, a crowd of several thousand had amassed outside. The police refused to hand the men over, so hundreds of young men stormed the building. The police had been ordered not to use their firearms (Duluth's Public Safety Commissioner later confided to a journalist that he did "not want to see the blood of one White person spilled over six Blacks,"[635]) and were consequently helpless against the enraged mob, who were armed with bricks, hammers and other makeshift weapons. The crowd seized three of the black men – Elmer Jackson, Elias Clayton and Isaac McGhie. They were hanged to a lamppost on one of the main thoroughfares in downtown Duluth in front of a cheering crowd of thousands.[636]

The 10,000-strong crowd that witnessed the lynching was drawn from every section of Duluth society – with the obvious exception of the tiny black community. Newspaper accounts of the lynching noted the remarkable generational, social and gendered diversity of the crowd. The conspicuous presence of both sexes in the lynch mob attracted special interest. A Duluth newspaper noted that "Although hundreds of women mingled with the mob during the hangings, there was no sign of hysteria exhibited."[637] The lynch mob and the on-looking public also reflected the city's ethnic diversity. While some of the men implicated as being leaders of the lynch mob had characteristically Anglo-American

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the 19-year-old woman hours after the incident found no signs of sexual abuse or violence on her body. He concluded privately that whatever it was that had shaken the woman was "probably not rape." There were also significant contradictions and inconsistencies in the testimonies of both the woman and her male companion. Fedo surmises that the two youngsters were at best verbally assaulted or robbed by the circus workers, and probably decided to file the rape charge in order to exact revenge. See Fedo 2000, pp. 141–142.

635 Fedo 2000, p. 90.

636 Fedo 2000, pp. 95–120.

637 "Duluth Mob Hangs Negroes", *Duluth News Tribune*, 16.6.1920.

names (Miller, Burr, Johnson, Hughes, Smith), others came from recognizably immigrant backgrounds. Many of those who were subsequently arrested had Scandinavian names (Hedman, Olson, Hammarberg and Matson), while one was Jewish (Natelson), one was of Italian extraction (Dondino) and one was Finnish American (Oja). As Mikko Toivonen notes, the lynch mob's mix of Anglo-American, Scandinavian and other immigrant names was "representative of the ethnic composition of West Duluth."[638]

The Duluth lynchings attracted national attention and condemnation. Duluth's press decried the "disgrace" the lynch mob had brought on the city. The city's main newspaper declared "There is no history of a more brutal lynching in the country and Duluth's decent citizens must see there is no escape of the guilty from fair trial, or from conviction and punishment if guilty. Duluth cannot be guilty itself of two crimes – the lynching and the escape of those guilty."[639] The State government was quick to react. The Minnesota National Guard was sent from St. Paul to Duluth in order to stop the attempts of some young men to continue the violence. In contrast to lynchings in the South, a judicial process was also quickly instigated in order to prosecute the leading members of the mob. Eighteen men were indicted for the lynching, but only two were convicted and sent to jail. In 1921, the Minnesota State Assembly enacted an anti-lynching bill. While the reactions of officials in Duluth and Minnesota to the lynching was one of outrage and condemnation, not all town-dwellers and Minnesotans shared in this indignation. Some regional newspapers in the state expressed outright sympathy with the lynchers and many people in Duluth were reluctant to distance themselves from the lynch mob. In a macabre illustration of this sympathy,

638 Toivonen 1997, p. 186; "Kaksi hirttojoukkueen jäsentä pidätetty." *Työmies*, 22.6.1920; "Kuusi pidätetty neekerien hirttoon osanotosta." *Työmies*, 26.6.1920; "Uusia vankeja lynchaukseen osallisena." *Industrialisti*, 28.6.1920; "Kolme miestä lisää syytteeseen neekerien hirttämisestä." *Työmies*, 1.7.1920; "Kymmenen viimeisen neekerin hirttämisestä." *Työmies*, 3.7.1920; "Raiskaajia ja hirttäjiä aiotaan rangaista." *Työmies*, 20.7.1920.

639 "Duluth's Disgrace." *Duluth News Tribune*, 17.6.1920.

printed postcards featuring a photograph of the mob members smiling in front of the dead bodies of their victims quickly sold out in the many Duluth retail outlets that carried them.[640]

The three Finnish-American immigrant newspapers published in the Duluth area – *Päivälehti*, *Työmies*, and *Industrialisti* – all covered the lynching and its aftermath in great detail on their front and editorial pages. The day after the lynchings, all the newspapers published in-depth descriptions of the crime and commented on the hideous deed in their editorials. While all the newspapers strongly condemned the lynchings, the ideological foundations of each publication had an impact on the manner in which the events were framed and the way in which their outrage was expressed. These differences were already evident in the preferred vocabulary used in the newspapers' description of the events: while the conservative *Päivälehti* described the lynchers as "a furious crowd" (*hurjistunut väkijoukko*), the communist *Työmies* spoke of "a trashy mob" (*roskajoukko*) and the IWW's *Industrialisti* described "a bloodthirsty crowd."[641]

The differences in interpretation became clearer still in the newspapers' editorials. *Päivälehti*, based in Duluth, condemned the lynching, but it also qualified its criticism by pointing out the moral equivalence between the original crime of the black men and the subsequent lynchings. This newspaper reported the rape of the young Duluthian woman as an indisputable fact and foregrounded the crime as arguably the most horrible aspect of the case. They argued that "What happened in Duluth on Monday evening, when a group of Negroes disgustingly abused one young white girl, was the most horrible crime imaginable, deserving the harshest of punishments." Having acknowledged the despicable

640 Fedo 2000, p. 110.

641 "Hurjistunut väkijoukko hirttänyt kolme neekeriä." *Päivälehti*, 16.6.1920; "Roskajoukko hirttänyt neekereitä Duluthissa." *Työmies*, 16.6.1920; "3 neekeriä lynchattu Duluthissa." *Industrialisti*, 17.6.1920; "Suurjury kutsuttu tutkimaan neekerien hirttoa." *Työmies*, 17.6.1920; "Suurjury aloittanut kuulustelut." *Työmies*, 18.6.1920; "Taas rauhallisempaa Duluthissa." *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920; "Uusi hirttäjäissuunnitelma." *Työmies*, 19.6.1920.

nature of the original crime, the newspaper went on to condemn the murderous rule of the mob as an affront to law and order. The editors opined that the transfer of penal authority from elected officials to the hands of a violent mob would result in "anarchy" and "a general state of lawlessness and insecurity."[642] The editors of *Päivälehti* were preoccupied with condemning the "anarchy" of the lynch mob, as Toivonen has noted, but "not as worried about the fate of the three unfortunate African Americans."[643]

The two labor newspapers in the Duluth area, *Työmies* and *Industrialisti*, also condemned the lynching. Both publications associated the violent deed with the economic strife plaguing the north. In its first editorial after the murders, *Industrialisti* used the lynchings as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of workers' organization. The editors of *Industrialisti* referred to the lynchings as an example of true anarchy. The Wobbly editors commented on how "The sooner wage workers realize their position, join together in their work places, and unite work places with workers' organizations, the sooner [lynchings] will disappear."[644] While the *Työmies* editors were not as heavy-handed in linking the lynching to contemporary labor struggles, they still insisted that the background of the deed was in great part economic. They referred to the race riots in East St. Louis and Chicago, and noted that employers had incited racial hatred by attracting low-wage black labor from the South. The editors also lamented that the lynched circus workers were probably hired by greedy circus directors because of the low maintenance costs of black labor.[645] Thus, the labor papers brought the same economic framework to bear when explaining the lynchings in Duluth that they had also used when covering previous cases of racial violence.

For the labor press, the lynching of the three black circus workers brought back memories of when Kinkkonen had been tar-

642 "Laittomuus." *Päivälehti*, 17.6.1920.

643 Toivonen 1997, p. 187.

644 "Anarkia ja järjestetty toiminta." *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920.

645 "Rotuviha ja lynchaukset." *Työmies*, 18.6.1920.

geted in 1918 by a lynch mob in Duluth. Both *Industrialisti* and *Työmies* noted that, contrary to the contention of the bourgeois English-language press, the lynching of the three circus workers was not the first case of lynching in Duluth.[646] The explicit link made by the newspapers between the two lynchings reflected the radicals' understanding that anti-radical and anti-black violence formed part of the same capitalist onslaught against workers. After referencing the Kinkkonen lynching and connecting it with the lynching of the three black men, *Työmies* concluded its editorial with a scathing denunciation of capitalism: "Capitalist society is brutal and its life is violent. This violent characteristic is especially evident in this country. The continuous enactment of lynching is proof enough of this."[647]

However, *Työmies* augmented this economic framework with a more nuanced reading that did not shy away from a pressing conundrum: if lynching was merely a reflection of general anti-worker prejudice, why was it that black bodies overwhelmingly bore the brunt of this brutality? The *Työmies* editors noted: "[W]e wish to attract attention to the more general aspects of the incident, the violence that […] pushes the black-skinned people as a race – not just as individuals – outside legal protection." The fate of black Americans had been tragic: brought to America as slaves, exploited inhumanely, and only emancipated to live in constant feat of violent death – "always, every day!" The collective oppression of the black race was evident for anyone who ventured south of the Mason Dixon line. White violence, like black oppression, also had a decidedly collective aspect: it was not a mere symptom of individual prejudice or psychological pathology. The editorial concluded that lynching was a "national characteristic" of the United States and necessary for the workings of its violent capitalist society.[648] Thus, while framing their critique of the lynch-

646 "Anarkia tai järjestetty toiminta." *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920; "Rotuviha ja lynchaukset." *Työmies*, 18.6.1920.

647 "Rotuviha ja lynchaukset." *Työmies*, 18.6.1920.

648 "Rotuviha ja lynchaukset", *Työmies*, 18.6.1920. See also Toivonen 1997, p. 188. A Duluth IWW member, who wrote a long article on the lynchings

ing within economic language, the *Työmies* editors still acknowledged that black people suffered from oppression that was not entirely reducible to economic class. Their coverage of the 1919 race riots had already shown an awareness of the non-economic aspects of black plight in America, and these comments marked a further departure from the class reductionist reading of American racism.

This departure, tentative as it was, did not take place in a vacuum. It reflected a more general shift in the U.S. Left's engagement with racism. From 1913 onwards, the press of the Socialist Party paid more attention to race as an axis of oppression. New York socialists, in particular, showed a greater willingness to engage with the issue. The 1916 convention of New York's Socialist Party, for example, had acknowledged that black Americans were the most oppressed people among the U.S. working class and singled out lynching as a particularly morbid manifestation of their unrivalled plight.[649] These criticisms of the Socialist Party's traditional economic reductionism on race germinated in the party's leftwing and carried over to the incipient communist movement. Black communists in the African Blood Brotherhood and pressure from Comintern were instrumental in forcing the American communist movement, which was still heavily white in composition, to seriously consider the issue of race.[650] While the so-called Negro question did not feature prominently in the Finnish-American communist press, communist editors could hardly ignore these trends in the broader socialist and communist debates in America. Indeed, shortly after the Duluth lynchings, *Työmies* commented a letter that had appeared in *Call* in

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and their background for *Industrialisti*, was also more attentive to the racial background of the assault than the editors of the same paper. He noted the long history of racial hatred in the United States and the propaganda that had taught people everywhere to believe that "the negro is worse than white [people]." See "Taas rauhallisempaa Duluthissa", *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920.

649 Foner 1977, pp. 261–262.

650 Solomon 1998, pp. 3–21.

New York. The letter-writer in *Call* had noted that while he was sympathetic to the socialist cause, he could not join the party because of its commitment to racial equality. The editors lamented that the many socialist sympathizers who were wedded to racial chauvinism illustrated the depth of racial hatred in America.[651] The New York-based *Call* was among the main critical voices of the Socialist Party's complacency vis-à-vis the labor movement's traditional racism. This publication made Finnish socialists and communists reflect more critically on the economic frameworks they had previously used as standard tools when seeking to explain racial strife.

This increasing awareness of the multifaceted nature of oppression in America had its limits. Nowhere were these limits more evident than in the question of gender. As historians of lynching have noted, sexual and gendered stereotypes of bestial, predatory black males and vulnerable, virtuous white females figured heavily in most spectacle lynchings and in many race riots. The stronger these stereotypes became, the more brutal the violence. Whereas antebellum blacks had been depicted as childish and lethargic, the more malicious racism of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that was prevalent in the United States cast black men as violently impulsive and sexually uncontrollable. A common justification of lynch violence posited that only the threat of violence of the most horrific kind could keep the bestial nature of black masculinity in check and white womanhood protected.[652] Duluth was no exception: the alleged sexual assault of black men against a young white woman served as a catalyst for violence and legitimated the most horrid methods of vigilante punishment. The conservative *Päivälehti* newspaper wrote that the rape of a white woman by a group of black men was "the most horrible crime imaginable" and deserved "the harshest of punishments," before going on to condemn mob rule. The labor press was more discerning – they were careful to refer to the

651 "Syvällä rotuvihan juuret." *Työmies*, 16.7.1920.

652 Brundage: 1993, pp. 17–48.

events that had catalyzed the lynching as "an alleged rape" or "a rape that is said to have happened."[653] Still, their comments on race and gender betrayed a distinct inability to move beyond the cultural imagery that associated black men with impulsive sexual violence.

The radical newspapers did not treat black men's proclivity towards violence as a biological given, but made an effort to explain it with reference to the history and social structures of capitalist society. In an attempt to contextualize the alleged attack of the black circus workers against the white woman, *Industrialisti* noted that it was the white race that had taught Southern blacks "how to rob, how to chase women, and how to do everything else. Is it any wonder, then, if those hated, persecuted and despised ignorant human beings commit even the most barbaric of deeds, when they have not been taught any better, when they cannot understand any better, and when they lack all the capabilities of better behavior." The writer concluded that "People reared up in slavery and ignorance commit deeds that are the consequence of centuries-long conditions continuing up to the present day."[654] The communist *Työmies* newspaper did not engage in similar attempts to explain black men's purported proclivity for sexual violence. The editors consciously and consistently avoided commenting on "the alleged rape" and were content to comment on the "broader" economic and social implications of the case. It is hard, and somewhat counterproductive, to assess the private sentiments of the journalists, but it is still interesting in this light to consider a private letter the editor of *Työmies* sent to his counterpart in at *Toveri* newspaper in Oregon, shortly after the lynchings in Duluth. In the letter, the *Työmies* editor, Arvid Nelson, made much the same point on race, sex and capitalism as the writer in *Industrualisti*:

653 "Roskajoukko hirttänyt neekereitä Duluthissa." *Työmies*, 16.6.1920; "Duluth", *Työmies*, 21.6.1920.

654 "Taas rauhallisempaa Duluthissa," *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920.

> Presuming that the [rape of the white woman] really did take place, as they often do no doubt, it is a reflection of the status of the colored folk in our land. They are compelled to live under conditions that are horrible in the extreme – take for example the selective draft statistics on venereal diseases in the southern states – and are treated like cattle, receiving hardly any education at all. Is it any wonder then that they have the instincts of animals and err in their ways? Traveling with a tough gambling outfit of a circus (another example of capitalist civilization), like these unfortunate negroes did, they should have been kept under constraint like other wild beasts they were transporting from place to place.[655]

Thus, while these radical journalists rejected the idea that black impulsiveness and predatory sexual conduct could be explained with inherent traits, they still maintained that accusations of black bestiality carried weight and required some explanation. Rejecting biological racialism, they resorted to economic racialism: black men behaved violently and in a predatory manner because of a long history of capitalist exploitation. The social and political implications of the two racialisms could be much the same, as Nelson's letter suggests. Whatever the reason for black bestiality, segregation seemed the safest policy until they had developed a more civilized consciousness.

The commentary of the radical Finnish-American press on the Duluth lynchings, like their approach to racial violence in general, was thus characterized by tensions and ambiguities. On the one hand, they condemned the violence in the harshest of terms, showed genuine sympathy for the victims and engaged in an analysis that sought to explain the individual deed within the broader context of American racism. On the other hand, they were still wedded to the economic framework that tended to reduce racial violence to capitalist exploitation, and were unable to distance themselves from some of the most engrained ra-

655 Letter from Arvid Nelson to William N. Reivo, 28.6.1920. Arvid Nelson Papers. Immigration History Research Center. University of Minnesota. Folder: Arvid General 1920 (Jan-June), Box 2.

cial stereotypes that fueled the violence. Moreover, they showed a distinct inability or unwillingness for self-reflection as Finnish Americans. What was the position of Finns or Finnish radicals in the white-black dichotomy that required such brutal boundary work to maintain its salience?

3.5. "Did You See the Circus?" Witnessing Violence and Making Race

In assigning blame for the Duluth lynchings, as with other acts of racial violence, the Finnish-American radical papers looked to others: unorganized and ignorant workers; chauvinistic Americans; and, the ultimate culprit, capitalism. Writers often took gleeful pleasure in pointing out the hypocrisies in American society, with its ideals of liberty, equality and enlightenment, that lynching so glaringly brought to the fore. A writer for *Industrialisti* noted sardonically some days after the Duluth lynchings that "There has been no talk of civilizing the pagans in Duluth or in the pages of this town's 'leading newspapers,' after white barbarians committed a deed that no pagans have ever committed against 'civilized Christians.'" Maybe it was the "civilized whites" who needed civilizing, the writer noted.[656] No writer pondered whether these "white barbarians" included Finns. A conservative newspaper did accuse IWW members of participating in the lynching,[657] which was resolutely denied by the Wobblies. The Wobblies, for their part, noted that "certain quarters" of Duluth's Finnish community had incited racial hatred against blacks and that "one group of Finns" had attempted to "purge negroes" some months prior to the lynching. In *Industrialisti*, a journalist stated "Now that this [lynching] has happened, we are moved to be reminded of these previous attempts, and the result naturally is that

656 "Duluthista", *Industrialisti*, 2.7.1920.

657 "Duluth", *Päivälehti*, 21.6.1920. For Finnish IWW members' angry rebuttal of this allegation, see "Duluthista. Se ruokotoin valhe." *Industrialisti,* 25.6.1920.

the sowing has now borne fruit."[658] These coy allusions to Finnish participation in the incitement of racial hatred and participation in the lynching itself were never elaborated upon.

It is clear that Finns were not merely innocent bystanders in the events. One of the arrested mob members was a Finn (Gust Oja), and Finns were undoubtedly also prominent in the 10,000-strong crowd that witnessed the lynching. Duluth had a major Finnish population – 3,210 residents in 1920 – and many of Duluth's Finns resided very close to the scene of the lynchings. Duluth's main Finnish neighborhood, Minnesota Point, stood directly adjacent to the city police station, the scene of the riot, and only two blocks away from the lamppost on Second Avenue East where the lynchings had taken place. However, like other Duluthians who saw the violence, Finnish witnesses were slow to come forward. Most people in Duluth assumed "an impassive posture toward the lynchings, feeling it was best not to discuss it further."[659] Like "all dirty secrets," the murders were treated "as something best left unspoken."[660] It is thus difficult to assert anything certain about the emotional involvement of Finnish witnesses during the incident. Two newspaper texts do, however, offer a rare glimpse into the reactions and involvement of Finnish participants.

The first was written by a *Päivälehti* journalist the day after the lynching, when hundreds of Duluthians visited the site of the crime to gather macabre souvenirs from the spot. Sitting in his home near the site of the lynchings, the journalist lamented that many of his compatriots had joined the crowd and had subsequently made light of the terrible events that had transpired at the spot just hours earlier. The journalist noted: "[I]f you happen to sit by an open window at your room, you cannot spare your ears from pathetic witticisms: 'Did you see the circus last night? – You mean did I go watch the pagans get hanged,' and other similar

658 "Anarkia tai järjestetty toiminta", *Industrialisti*, 18.6.1920.

659 Fedo 2000, p. 119.

660 Green 2000, p. vii.

things."[661] That Finnish Duluthians visited the site to collect souvenirs, and jokingly equated the lynching of circus workers to the circus itself, bespeaks of Finns' deep immersion into the culture of American lynching. The collection of souvenirs – parts of rope, maimed body parts, the charred remains of burned bodies – was a common feature of American lynching culture, and this macabre behavior was also often commented upon in newspaper accounts. By 1920, the equation of lynching with entertainment had also become a standard feature. Spectacle lynchings and their commercial reproduction in newspaper reports, movies and photographs had made the phenomenon a part of the emergent consumer culture in America.[662] Finnish Duluthians were evidently well aware of the connection between lynching and performed mass entertainment.

To be sure, not all spectators of the lynchings witnessed the violence with equal elation. The second newspaper text, which sheds light on Finnish participation, was penned over two decades after the events and its author remembered the macabre spectacle with disgust and outrage. Writing in the midst of Detroit's 1943 race riots, a correspondent of *Industrialisti*, who witnessed the unrest, reflected on the senselessness of racial violence and recalled his own memories from Duluth in 1920. The writer told how he had unwillingly found himself "in the midst of the frenzied crowd" from where he had to witness "the horrible deed, which I will never forget. The screams of cowardly people, most of them women, still ring in my ears, […] 'throw rocks at them, kick them in the head, and spit in their eyes.'" These cries had gone on, the writer continued, even when the black men were

661 "Duluth", *Päivälehti*, 17.6.1920. Original text: "Suomalaiset ovat luonnollisesti mukana näissä uteliaisuusvaelluksissa ja jos satut istumaan aukiolevan ikkunan lähettyvillä huoneessasi, et voi säästää korviasi säälittäviltä kokkapuheilta: 'Olitko illalla sirkusta katsomassa? – niin katsomassako kuin pakanoita hirtettiin', ynnä muuta sen tapaista."

662 Wood 2009.

"hanging from the lamppost, lifeless."[663] The temporal distance to the events should certainly be taken into account when considering these comments, but there is no reason to doubt that many of the witnesses were genuinely shocked by what transpired in front of their eyes. As historians of lynching have noted, this was a common eyewitness reaction.[664] While those who tried to actually stop the lynching in Duluth were few and far between (local priests Reverend William Powers and P. J. Maloney stood as lone exceptions), there is no doubt that many among the body of spectators witnessed the events with silent horror and condemnation rather than with glee and racist fury.

These two newspaper accounts of Finnish witnesses of the lynchings indicate that Duluth's Finns, like all contemporary lynching audiences, diverged in their emotional involvement. Some equated the lynchings with entertainment and witnessed the torment of the black bodies with gleeful elation; others were horrified and speechless. One second-generation Finn from Duluth recalled how his father's acquaintances had been divided on the issue. While his socialist father had been "horrified that such an atrocity took place in a civilized country," his father's friend, an "ultraconservative" Swedish-speaking Finnish immigrant, had "jeered that [lynching] was the only way to keep the 'niggers' in line."[665]

Still, witnessing the violence together, no matter how emotionally disposed, reinforced Finns' and other immigrants' sense of belonging to a supra-ethnic white community. The social mechanisms through which lynchings and other forms of racial violence reinforced notions of community cohesion and shared whiteness were more complicated than merely being a question of whether people approved of or disapproved of the violence. In discussing the ways in which lynchings bound together white communities

663 "Detroitin kuulumisia. Kaikki hiljaista roturintamalla." *Industrialisti*, 16.7.1943.

664 Brundage 1993, p. 40.

665 Aili Jarvenpa: *In Two Cultures: The Stories of Second-Generation Finnish Americans*. North Star Press: St. Cloud 1992, pp. 48–49.

in the South, the social historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage has noted that the social function of lynchings as an enforcer of cohesion among the white community had less to do with explicit approval of lynchings by all members of the white communities and more to do with the mere act of witnessing together the public torture and murder of a non-white victim. As Brundage states: "Some spectators may have been shocked and disgusted by the violence they witnessed, but it was their visible, explicit, public act of participation and not their ambiguous, private sentiment that bound the lynchers both socially and morally."[666]

Indeed, the *Industrialisti* writer, who recalled his purportedly involuntary participation in the lynching with horror and disgust, was still bound to other witnesses by his mere act of viewing the violence. His physical participation in the crowd of thousands of white town dwellers only served to reinforce his sense of belonging on the white side of the American color line. After all, it was because of his whiteness that he was able to blend in with the "frenzied" crowd and was able to witness the shocking violence that was perpetrated on the black bodies, without himself feeling physically threatened. For the hundreds of Finns who witnessed the violence with their own eyes, the experience in all probability reinforced their sense of shared whiteness, whatever their internal emotional reaction to the violence.

The relations between Duluth's many European immigrant nationalities were not devoid of strife. One Finnish informant in the late 1930s told a WPA interviewer that she had not liked moving to Duluth. She contrasted the city's atmosphere of racial strife with the amicable interethnic relations of the countryside: "[T]here was never any slurs about, or jokes against one nationality or the other [in Swan Lake]. It was only when I came to Duluth that I began to notice discrimination in remarks about 'Swedes' or 'Irishmen' or 'Jews'. Everybody seemed to be race conscious, or should I say nationality conscious, and everyone attacked a na-

666 Brundage 1993, p. 40. See also Mattias Smångs: "Doing Violence, Making Race: Southern Lynching and White Racial Group Formation." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 121, No. 5, March 2016, pp. 1329–1374.

tionality just as if it were everyday talk."[667] The lynching of three black men in 1920 served to unify all of Duluth's European immigrant nationalities as a single white crowd of onlookers. Irrespective of whether Finnish immigrants who witnessed the violent spectacle wanted it or not, they had also been included in this supra-national white audience.

For many Finnish immigrant workers, however, the hyper-vulnerability of black Americans did not come as a surprise. Most had read about the reign of white terror in the South from newspapers, but many also had first-hand experiences of southern Jim Crow. The South did not attract many Finnish immigrants, but was not totally unknown for them either. In the early 1920s, a group of socialist Finns did establish a co-operative farm in Jesup, Georgia. The co-operative's relationship with the area's black population seems to have been amicable. The Finnish co-op store in Jesup was apparently the only white-owned store that allowed black customers. In 1978, a former store worker reminisced about the store in an interview: "We served blacks just like we did whites." The relationship between Finns and blacks was "very good," the interviewee noted, adding that the farm also employed black workers.[668] Still, the Finnish socialists were unambiguously white in Georgia's racial system. In a 1920s pamphlet, produced by the co-op, which sought to attract Finns to Georgia, the writer stated that it was a state where "Finns have a 'good reputation."[669] Finns could also take advantage of the system. The same pamphlet made much of the easy living in the South: "Negro labor" was so cheap and ubiquitous that Finns would not need to toil too

667 Interview with T. Ruth by Stanley Levine. 15 December 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

668 Interview with Uuno Pasanen by Kalervo Mustonen in 1 February, 1978, Lake Worth, Florida. Kalervo Mustonen's Oral History Collection. The Institute of Migration, Turku.

669 *Suomalaisten osuusfarmi Georgiassa.* Fairfield Co-Operative Farm Association. McKinnon via Jesup, Georgia [c. 1922], p. 11.

hard.[670] The publication also sought to strip Finns of their "misconception that only Negroes could make it" in the South.[671]

Thus, Finnish radicals who settled in the South could easily become accustomed to life on the white side of the Jim Crow line. But many writers in the radical press also recorded more scathing depictions of the southern system. Especially illuminating are texts written for the labor press by Finnish migratory workers based on their travels below the Mason Dixon Line. It was the first time that many of them had fully encountered the totality of the Jim Crow system. For anyone who had taken a Jim Crow street car or seen first-hand the bottomless contempt many white southerners had for black southerners, it was hard to maintain the notion that black Americans were only despised and oppressed because of their position as workers. Indeed, letters and other texts by Finnish workers traveling in the South almost always commented on the strange system of racial segregation. Moreover, they often recounted incidents when they had unknowingly breached the racial codes of the Dixie. One correspondent in the radical *Sosialisti* recounted how he went to sit in a colored car in a South-bound train at a station in Washington D. C., since it had had more room than the white section. He remarked that "It was soon apparent, however, that I had to abandon the socialist principle that all workers are my comrades regardless of race and color." Train staff were adamant that the Finn would have to relocate to the white section, where he should sit with people of his own "estate" (*sääty*). The experience brought to the fore the hypocrisy of American freedom. He reflected that "I could feel the 'Yankee blood' in me decrease."[672]

In an article on his travels in the South, Richard Pesola—who was later to emerge as one of the chief experts on the race question within the Finnish-American communist movement—recounted how the color line deeply separated blacks from whites and how

670 *Suomalaisten osuusfarmi Georgiassa* [c. 1922], p. 17.

671 *Suomalaisten osuusfarmi Georgiassa* [c. 1922], p. 3.

672 Esaias Koukkulainen: "Huomioita matkaltani etelään." *Sosialisti*, 20.1.1916.

"a severe punishment [met] anyone who dared to challenge those separations." Pesola lamented that white capitalists had instilled in white workers a deep hatred of black people, and white workers looked on their black comrades as little better than animals, who could be killed at will. The system was buttressed by a biased justice system that ignored white crimes against blacks, but meted out severe punishment to blacks who sought to defend themselves from white aggression. The situation made class struggle impossible: white workers denied black workers entry to their racial unions and black workers could consequently be easily used to break the strikes of white workers, further inflaming mutual racial hatred.[673] All this illustrated that black oppression in America could not be simplistically equated with the oppression of the white worker. A Finnish Wobbly reported from Arizona that "It is hard to watch the slavery that [the southern blacks] have to endure, because it is even worse than our own slavery, which is bad enough." Working conditions were worse for blacks than for whites, and they lived in constant fear of lynch violence.[674] There was thus recognition among Finnish socialists that race was a particularly troublesome axis of oppression in America, which could not be simply reduced to class.

Still, the leftist press made no serious attempt to examine Finnish radicals' possible complicity in the oppression of black workers. Others – American chauvinists and capitalists – were to blame. Thus, while there was an increasing awareness of the non-economic aspects of American racism in the Finnish-language radical press, there was little willingness to examine Finn-

673 Richard Pesola: "Floridan ja etelävaltioiden olosuhteista." *Työmies*, 11.2.1916.

674 Arizonan Leijona: "Tumman kansan laitumelta." *Industrialisti*, 25.10.1919. Memoirs written by migratory workers also often dwelled upon the authors' surprise regarding the severity of the Jim Crow system and lamented the ill treatment of southern blacks by whites. See Hedman 1925, pp. 12–13; John Laari: *50 vuotta elämän kouluja Amerikassa*. Finnish Press: Brooklyn [1965], p. 39; Bruno Kallio: *Elämäni.* Unpublished manuscript. Migration Archive at the Department of European and World History, University of Turku.

ish immigrants' own complicity in perpetrating this oppression. This was becoming an increasingly untenable position. As Finnish radicals flocked to the emerging American communist movement in the early 1920s, they were entering an organization that was to have a profound effect on the racial thinking of its white membership. The Communist Party of the United States was the first white-majority leftist organization in U.S. history that consciously challenged the racial chauvinism of its white members and required that they perform some serious soul-searching about their own – not just other Americans' – racial attitudes. Coming to terms with their own racial prejudices, especially against Jewish and black Americans, became a trying ordeal for Finnish-American leftists.

4. Down with Chauvinism: Communists and Race

At the Finnish Socialist Federation's convention in Chicago in December 1918, some of the associations leaders confided in a Russian guest – who turned out to be an undercover government agent – about their approach to nationality in the midst of what seemed to many to be a world revolution. The leaders proclaimed "We are not Finns, we are Bolsheviki; that is, we are Internationalists."[675] This comment captures the enthusiasm most Finnish-American socialists felt about the Bolshevik Revolution, but it also highlights a noteworthy tension. While the Finnish radicals vocally asserted their absolute commitment to the Bolshevik brand of internationalism, they could not, however, escape the fact that they were the leaders of a self-described *Finnish* organization. In other words, there was a tension between the explicit denunciation of national labels and the nationally exclusive organizational setting in which the denunciation was uttered. This tension plagued the Finnish-American communist movement throughout its peak years in the 1920s and 1930s. This tension had been present and debated for over two decades, but it gained new urgency as Finnish-American radicals entered *en masse* an organization – the Communist Party – that was far more militant in its internationalism, anti-chauvinism and anti-colonialism than the Socialist Party or even the IWW had ever been.

Engagement with the Communist Party forced many Finnish radicals to turn their gaze inward for the first time in their exam-

675 Quoted in Kostiainen 1978, p. 63. At the Chicago convention, many delegates also demanded that the FSF work more closely with non-Finnish socialists and that is should do its utmost to amalgamate Finnish workers with the broader American labor movement.

ination of racial prejudice and chauvinism in America. They had previously mostly laid the blame for racism on ignorant, impulsive and capitalist Americans. In the commentaries on the Chicago race riots or the Duluth lynchings, for example, "whites" were referred to as an out-group that the radical Finns did not identify with. However, the Communist Party, especially from the late 1920s onwards, had little patience for such distancing efforts. It insisted that its immigrant membership examine their privileged position as white workers and that they should do their utmost to root out the remnants of white chauvinism from their midst. As historians of immigrants and whiteness have noted, the Communist Party rhetoric on race served to socialize the radicals as white workers – and as white Americans. The Communist Party's militant anti-racism took the American folk categories of color at face value and insisted that its immigrant members adopt these categories in their self-identification. Matthew Frye Jacobson has noted that "By insisting on the polar categories of 'whites' and 'Negroes,' [the Communist] Party quietly remade the European immigrants within its ranks – whether Jewish, Italian, Finnish, or Irish – as a monolithic body of white workers."[676] This process of remaking, however, was far from unilineal or uncomplicated. Competing forms of self-identification continued to exist and the calls to examine white privilege were met with varying degrees of resistance.

The extensive scholarship on U.S. communism and race has rarely discussed the immigrant cadre's participation in the communist campaign for black rights and against white chauvinism. Even when immigrants are mentioned, they are often seen as mere objects of the anti-chauvinist drive – parochial and obstinate "ethnics" whose atavistic attachment to their ethnically insular organizations, and their implicit racism, had to be broken. In his definitive account of American communism and African Americans, the historian Mark Solomon has, for example, argued that "the Negro question and the struggle against chauvinism was

676 Jacobson 1998, p. 248. See also Guglielmo 2003, pp. 137–138; Roediger 2005, p. 216.

of little interest [to the "ethnics" in the CPUSA]; it did not jar their collective consciousness or conscience."[677] With a particular focus on the Finns in the Party, David Ahola has in a similar vein asserted that Finnish communists at best "overlooked" the anti-chauvinist campaign.[678] These accounts have not, however, engaged with the contemporary press of the immigrant communists. Thus, they have overlooked the lively debates that were conducted in these publications vis-à-vis race and chauvinism. Far from mere bystanders, immigrants were active participants in the Communist Party's racial politics. To understand their thinking on race and chauvinism during the 1920s and 1930s, it is important to consider the severe effect World War I and its accompanying revolutionary fervor had on the consciousness of radical immigrants.

4.1. World War I and the Nationality Question: Racial Mixture as Modernity?

The First World War and its aftermath significantly affected the thinking of Finnish radicals on nationality. The seismic events also impacted their views on race and nationality. An intense debate on nationality emerged during the war in the socialist publications, which was in large measure prompted by Finland's uncertain future. The Grand Duchy of Finland was engaged in the war as part of the Russian Empire and its potential crumbling in the near future seemed to open up new possibilities as to Finland's status as a sovereign realm. Among America's Finnish socialists, the calls for national independence for Finland and Europe's other small nationalities were both supported and treated with skepticism. Santeri Nuorteva, the representative of

677 Solomon 1998, p. 138.

678 Ahola 1980, p. 207. It is worth mentioning here that Ahola does not make use of contemporary Finnish-language sources in his short discussion of the Finns' attitudes towards the Jokinen Affair. Rather, his analysis is based on interviews he conducted in the late 1970s.

the short-lived Red Finnish government in the United States, for example, supported the national self-determination of Finland. Yet, at the same time he considered it "entirely logical" that Finland would eventually become a part of "a United States of a Republican Russia."[679] Two essays commented on the nationality question in the Finnish socialists' calendar for 1917. These articles took different positions on the merits of independence for Finland and other small nations. One of the essays was penned by Taavi Tainio, a major figure within the Finnish Social Democratic Party, who reflected upon recent political developments in Finland and supported Finnish independence. Tainio had been long a vocal proponent of socialist patriotism in Finland. During Finland's struggle for autonomy, he had constantly argued that socialism was wholly compatible with national pride.[680] Now Tainio lamented how Finns in America felt contemptuous towards Finland, often remarking that "nothing of value can happen there." Tainio countered this image by noting how Finland had become the first nation in the world with a socialist majority, and contended that it had proven the error of the assumption that smaller nations would eventually melt into larger ones.[681]

The other essay, by A. B. Mäkelä, took the opposite position and strongly criticized the notion that Europe should be divided into its national or racial constituent parts. This would not only

679 Quoted in Reino Kero: "Pessimistin ja optimistin näkemykset Venäjän vallankumouksen onnistumismahdollisuuksista syksyllä 1918. Oskari Tokoin ja Santeri Nuortevan kirjeenvaihtoa yli Atlantin." In Vilho Niitemaa, Päiviö Tommila & Kalervo Hovi (eds.): *Turun Historiallinen Arkisto XVII*. Polytypos: Turku 1972, p. 82. For Nuorteva, the idea of national self-determination and integration with a multinational "United States of Russia" was not contradictory. He noted in a letter to Oskari Tokoi, a Finnish socialist luminary, that "I am not a nationalist, but I do argue that the self-determination of nations, which allows each nation the freedom to develop according to its special national characteristics, is necessary for the life of each nation." See Kero 1972, p. 81.

680 Heikkilä 1993, pp. 75–76.

681 Taavi Tainio: "Katsaus taaksepäin Suomen toverien vaalivoiton johdosta." In *Kalenteri Amerikan suomalaiselle työväelle 1917*. Suomalaisen sos. kustannusyhtiön kirjapaino: Fitchburg 1916, p. 134.

be difficult – the Russian Empire alone included some 140 nationalities, Mäkelä noted – but would also hark back to a more primitive time when racial tribes lived isolated from each other. In the early twentieth century, the only pure races lived in "primitive civilizations," while all civilized peoples were "extremely diverse racial mixtures" (*mitä moninaisimpia rotusekoituksia*). The United States was a prime example. Mäkelä noted: "Race may have been the determining factor in the formation of nationalities in the natural state, but in contemporary developed circumstances racial relations do not have great significance." Thus, he argued that appeals to and an emphasis on race was a form of "regression, a return to a stage of development that has already been passed."[682]

For Mäkelä, nationalism was a force of regression, while all political developments that brought nationalities into more intimate interaction were progressive, no matter how brutal they might seem. He touted Russification policies in Finland as progressive since they had integrated Finns more strongly within the empire. He argued that it made no sense to develop national cultures and languages for all of Russia's many nationalities when they could all just learn Russian. It should be commended, he felt, that all subjects of the Russian Empire only needed to learn one literary language, which would hasten the development of civilization. Moreover, he added: "No matter how angry our feelings and prejudices become, it is still a fact that even such a terrible historical phase as Russian tyranny is still a forward step on the road of humankind's progress." Trying to make Finnish into a language of high culture and science was also an effort that unnecessarily hindered internationalization. Mäkelä suggested that Finnish schools invest more effort into teaching German, French and English, which would give ordinary Finns better access to world literature and science. It made no sense, Mäkelä stressed, to "develop from scratch a new European civilized language for a three-million-strong half-savage people." It was almost as "ridiculous," Mäkelä noted, as the efforts of Irish nationalists who

682 Mäkelä 1916, p. 55.

tried to resurrect the ancient Gaelic language even though they all were proficient in English, a major world language. For these same reasons, Mäkelä also commended U.S. military aggression in Mexico. No matter how brutal it was, it still brought history forward by forcing the purportedly insular Mexicans to "join others' company."[683]

Mäkelä's celebration of national and racial mixing as a harbinger of progress and modernity was far from a fringe position within Finnish-American socialism. It had been at the core of socialist thinking on the nationality question since the early Marxist criticism of Matti Kurikka in the early 1900s. The fusing of nationalities was seen as an inevitable outcome of capitalism's progress. Hence, any defense of national exclusivity in the face of this progressive development was depicted as being atavistic and regressive. Finnish-American socialists could argue that they, as residents of the most modern and the most nationally mixed capitalist society on the planet, had a broader perspective on the matter than their comrades in Finland, which was more economically backward and nationally homogeneous. Indeed, Mäkelä argued in his follow-up essay on the nationality question that he had received mostly positive feedback from his Finnish-American comrades vis-à-vis his criticism of Finnish independence. This was a far cry from the reception Mäkelä had received in Finland when he had brought up similar ideas. The world had progressed, Mäkelä surmised, but the differences in reception were not only due to temporal factors, but also spatial difference. Progressive ideas on national diversity were easier to air in the modern and mixed U.S. than in the more backward and insular Finland. Mäkelä noted that "It is only natural and easy to understand that here among America's Finnish comrades we have better circumstances to develop thinking that is free from the confines of nationality than we had in the Old Country."[684] A mixed racial society was equated with progress and modernity,

683 Mäkelä 1916, p. 64.

684 A. B. Mäkelä: "Vielä kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1917, p. 165.

while national preservation was deemed an atavistic remnant of a bygone era.

Indeed, in many ways industrial society in the United States had encouraged Finnish socialists to imagine national diversity as a co-product of progress and modernity. Strikes on the Mesabi Range in 1907, in the Copper Country in 1913, and many other industrial actions had brought Finnish workers into close co-operation with different European workers, as had other union and party activities. In the 1920s, the Sacco and Vanzetti case became a *cause célèbre* in the Finnish-language radical press, for example, and a communist Finn wrote a book on the case in 1927.[685] The campaign to secure a pardon for Tom Mooney was another inter-ethnic endeavor that engaged Finnish radicals.[686] The rhetoric on the picket lines and in party campaigns stressed the multinational character of the movements: the Socialist Party and unions, such as the Western Federation of Miners, had brought Irish, Slavic, Italian, Scandinavian and other European nationalities into close co-operation, paving the way for their eventual merger into a unified society.

Thus, the rhetoric on the connections between progress and the mixing of peoples was partly a product of U.S. industrial society. However, the background of Finnish socialists in Finland had also prepared them for this celebration of mixing. As Antti Häkkinen and Miika Tervonen have noted, for example, the early years of the1900s in pre-independence Finland was a time when nationalists in the country were much less insistent on stressing the racial purity of the nation than the strain of nationalism that became prominent after independence in 1917. The nationalism of Zachris Topelius, for example, celebrated the racial, linguistic

685 Aaro Hyrske: *Sacco-Vanzetti taistelu.* Amerikan suomalaisten sosialistisen kustannusliikkeiden liitto: Worcester 1927.

686 Interview with Carl Siren by Alfred Backman. 6 January 1939. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

and tribal mixture of Finland,[687] while J. V. Snellmann, another prominent nineteenth-century intellectual nationalist, hoped that the racially mixed Finnish people could show the error of European theories of race, which equated intellect and strength with the pure Caucasian race.[688] References to Finns' mixed racial background and their origin in Asia were common in socialist writings.[689] Thus, intellectual strains in both socialist theory and Topelius-style Finnish nationalism encouraged Finnish socialists to embrace the idea of a melting pot, at least when it came to European nationalities.

Indeed, the celebration of capitalism's power to join world peoples into a single entity had its limits. Mäkelä discussed mainly European and American peoples; other peoples were only referred to offhandedly as an example of how a lack of modernity and diversity coalesced. It was on "other continents," Mäkelä noted, that there were still racially pure and "primitive" people, illustrating the connection between racial insularity and asserted development.[690] The limits of a melting pot society were explicated more explicitly by Moses Hahl in his article on Europe's nationality question. Like Mäkelä, he argued against nationally exclusive nation-states and came out in support of multinational states on both political and health grounds. In his view, endogamy led to genetic ailments, while interbreeding improved the stock. But racial mixing was only a virtue to a certain extent. The multinational, melting pot society he imagined was a decidedly European or Euro-American society, not a world society. He was explicitly unwilling to extend his miscegenationist logic to en-

687 Antti Häkkinen & Miika Tervonen: "Johdanto." In Antti Häkkinen, Panu Pulma & Miika Tervonen (eds.): *Vieraat kulkijat – tutut talot. Näkökulmia etnisyyden ja köyhyyden historiaan.* SKS: Helsinki 2005, pp. 7–8. See also Tervonen 2014.

688 Jouko Jokisalo: "Rotuteorioiden suomalaiset – olkaamme mongoleja." In Jouko Jokisalo & Raisa Simola: *Kulttuurisia kohtaamisia ja solmukohtia.* Like: Helsinki 2010, pp. 20–21.

689 See, for example, Pekka Paavilainen: "Buttesta." *Punikki*, 15.11.1929.

690 Mäkelä 1916.

compass extra-European races, but maintained that the European and Mongolian races were "too distant from each other" in order for their mixing to produce good results. Oriental races were not a source of new, invigorating blood for Europeans, but were rather an existential threat.[691]

In his explicit defense of the white European race against the non-white hordes of Asia, the arch-Social Darwinist Hahl was something of an outlier among prominent Finnish socialists.[692] But his contention that the differences between European nationalities were less natural and less socially significant than the differences between Europeans and non-Europeans, or white and non-white, was much more widely shared. Mäkelä, too, had mostly limited his discussion and celebration of mixing to European peoples. As an alternative to a Europe of nation-states, Mäkelä proposed a "United States of Europe," not a United States of the World. The non-European peoples were quietly excluded from this continental melting pot.[693]

Indeed, the role of non-white workers in the socialist melting pot was less clear than the role of white European nationalities. Just as the American experience touted by Mäkelä had helped Finnish workers to move beyond nationality, it had also encouraged Finnish workers to compartmentalize between white, black and yellow races. Tension between this melting pot logic and compartmentalization would become evident in the 1920s as Finnish radicals entered the U.S. Communist party *en masse*, which insisted on teaching tough lessons on race to its immigrant members.

691 Moses Hahl: "Pienten kansojen tulevaisuus." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 9, No. 11–12, November 1915, pp. 523–527. On Hahl's evolutionary thought, see Pilli 1985.

692 However, he was not a complete outlier. Taavi Tainio, for example, expressed similar ideas about the threat of the racial degeneration of the white race. See Tainio 1915.

693 Mäkelä 1916; Mäkelä 1917.

4.2. Communist Finns and Black Americans

When the U.S. Socialist Party split in the summer of 1919, the Finnish Socialist Federation initially stayed intact and continued its affiliation with the party. Even many in the left wing were unwilling to abandon the legal mass party. Indeed, relatively few Finns joined the two underground communist parties that were established in August 1919.[694] However, the same internal strife between the left and right wings that had split the Socialist Party continued to tear apart the FSF. At its 1920 convention, the dominant left wing of the FSF discontinued its membership in the Socialist Party. In 1922, they joined the newly-founded Workers (Communist) Party. The Socialist Party loyalists, for their part, organized a new federation that continued to be affiliated to the Socialists. A bitter struggle for the loyalties of members and the ownership of halls, newspapers and other property ensued. Of the federation newspapers, three – *Työmies*, *Toveri*, *Toveritar* – became affiliated with the Workers Party, along with the humor magazine *Lapatossu* (from 1921 onwards *Punikki* ["The Red"]). After a hard battle, Fitchburg's *Raivaaja* remained tied to the Socialist Party. To serve their East Coast constituency, the communists founded a new newspaper in 1921, entitled *Eteenpäin* ["Forward"], in Worcester, Massachusetts (in 1931, it relocated to New York City). The Finnish-American labor movement was now split in three: the Socialist Party, the Wobblies, and the Workers Party. It was the latter group that dominated in the West and Midwest, while in the East, the communists and socialists were about equally strong. After many Wobblies flocked to the communists, the Finnish IWW shrank to a much smaller and more doctrinaire group of staunch syndicalists, who continued to have a limited influence throughout Finnish America.[695]

The Workers Party (which in 1927 became the Communist Party of the United States, or CPUSA) soon assumed a more as-

694 Kostiainen 1978, 80–81.

695 Ross 1977, pp. 165–193; Kostiainen 1978; Kivisto 1984, pp. 162–169.

sertive position than the socialists vis-à-vis the question of race. While it remained overwhelmingly white throughout the 1920s, the Workers Party had a small but vocal group of black radicals in its ranks. Many of these individuals were West Indian immigrants, who had been inspired by the anti-colonial implications of the Bolshevik Revolution and saw communism as a potent force in the dual struggle against global white and bourgeois supremacy.[696] The Communist International's position on the American race question further steered the Workers Party's in a more radical direction. Lenin understood imperialism as "the highest stage of capitalism" and identified liberation movements of oppressed nationalities as revolutionary forces that were on an equal footing with the industrial proletariat. This policy informed the Bolsheviks' domestic nationality policies, but Lenin also insisted on its global relevance. The position of black Americans was interpreted from this perspective: they were deemed to be an oppressed nationality and race that was to have an important role in the broader anti-capitalist struggle in America. Furthermore they would play a vital part in "the liberation struggle of the entire African race," because of their purportedly developed position vis-à-vis other African peoples.[697] Indeed, the first program of the Workers Party in 1921 addressed the plight of black Americans more assertively than any Socialist Party program had since 1901. Discussed under a separate heading, black Americans were identified as having been "more ruthlessly [exploited and oppressed] than any other group." Their oppression was deemed to be a result of a combination of economic factors and racial oppression, which had been intensified by the "anti-Negro policies of organized labor." Abandoning the U.S. Left's ordinary squeamishness

696 Solomon 1998, pp. 3–67; Naison 2005, pp. 3–25.

697 Quoted in Solomon 1998, p. 42. Quote is from the statement of Comintern's Negro Commission at the Comintern's Fourth Congress in 1922. Black Americans had an especially prominent role in the Commission, which was established at the Congress. See Solomon 1998, pp. 40–43.

about "social equality," the program called for full "economic, political and social equality" for black Americans.[698]

The Finnish-language communist press also became more assertive in its calls for racial equality and the newspapers followed organizational work among black workers. They did not, however, completely shrug off the notion that black people occupied a lower stage of development than white workers. A *Työmies* editorial could, for example, purport that "The exploitative class has always used the Negroes as strike breakers, because they are less organized and more ignorant than the whites."[699] Another article asserted the following: "It is true that [the Negroes] are generally on a lower stage of development than the whites."[700] While black workers were seen as occupying a lower rung of the developmental ladder than white or Finnish workers, communist newspapers were still convinced of their potential to develop – but even here there were differences in the degrees of optimism. When the American Negro Labor Congress was established in Chicago in October 1925,[701] Finnish-language communist newspapers generally welcomed the organization. However, a variety of opinions bubbled just under the surface, reflecting the existence of slightly divergent attitudes towards the question of black workers' developmental capability. Whereas the East Coast *Eteenpäin* welcomed the founding congress by viewing it as having risen out of black workers' own "awakening,"[702] the Midwestern *Työmies* was more

698 Workers Party of America: *Program and Constitution*. Lyceum & Literature Department: New York City (1922), pp. 14–15: The program was also published in Finnish. See W.P. Suomalainen järjestö: *Amerikan Työväenpuolueen (Workers Party of America) ohjelma ja säännöt sekä W.P. Suomalaisen Järjestön säännöt*. W.P. Suomalainen järjestö: Superior 1924. See also Solomon 1998, pp. 20–21.

699 "Neekerityöläisten kongressi." *Työmies*, 4.11.1925.

700 "Käytännöllistä kansainvälisyyttä." *Työmies*, 22.8.1926.

701 On the ANLC's establishment, see Harvard Sitkoff: *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1978, pp. 141–142; Solomon 1998, pp. 52–67.

702 "Amerikan neekerityöläisten kongressi." *Eteenpäin*, 20.10.1925.

paternalistic in its choice of words: "Negroes are a lively and a brisk people, who will, if class consciousness can be installed in them, struggle with the whites to bring down the exploitative system."[703]

Thus, for *Työmies* editors class consciousness was something that needed to be installed in black workers, presumably by more developed white workers. Alternatively, the editors of *Eteenpäin* depicted the Congress as having emerged from an initiative instigated by black workers. Both papers subscribed, however, to the same understanding of cultural evolution and black workers' low stage of development. The *Eteenpäin* editors reflected that "The organization of Negroes is only at its beginning, but it will proceed along the same lines of class struggle as the development of other nationalities and races in America has proceeded. The congress is the first step on this road."[704] The position of Finnish communists on the so-called Negro question in the 1920s was similar to that espoused by the IWW in the 1910s: black workers were still less developed than white workers, but exposure to industrial capitalism would usher them towards the same level of class consciousness. How much paternal guidance this required from white workers was an issue of some divergence of opinion.

Yet, even if many Finnish communists held that black workers were in need of guidance, few were willing to lend their own support. Finnish communists had only very limited contact with black radicals throughout the 1920s. When black radicals were encountered at party-related events, their presence was often noted – reflecting the novelty of such contact – and commented upon in a paternalistic manner. One Finnish New Yorker, for example, noted approvingly that a local party school had attracted "members from all nationalities, with even one black comrade,

703 "Neekerityöläisten kongressi." *Työmies*, 4.11.1925.

704 "Amerikan neekerityöläisten kongressi." *Eteenpäin*, 20.10.1925. See also "Värillinen työtoveri." *Työmies*, 24.10.1926; "Käytännöllistä kansainvälisyyttä." *Työmies*, 22.8.1926; "'Vain takapajuisia kansoja.'" *Työmies*, 7.11.1926; "Neekerinaisten järjestämiskysymys." *Työmies*,

and a brisk comrade at that."[705] Until the mid-1920s, contact was made more difficult by the language federation structure of the party, but even after a process of Bolshevization, interracial contacts remained rather rare. This was partly because most Finnish communists lived in near lily-white sections of the country. Ernest Koski, a Finnish-American communist journalist, for example, remembers his Virginia, Minnesota, local to have been almost completely Finnish, with only a scattering of Slovenians and Italians.[706] But even in cities like Chicago, Detroit and New York, contact was not frequent. Indeed, the lack of an internationalist spirit among Finnish communists was a common refrain in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Indeed, in an open letter to Finnish-American communists in 1930, regarding the struggle in the co-operative movement, the Communist International accused Finnish communists of espousing national parochialism and of insufficient internationalism.[707]

The segregated structure of labor hierarchies also made contact more difficult. A case in point occurred in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, where Finnish immigrants labored alongside Cape Verdean immigrants in the area's cranberry bogs.[708] In the

705 Edw. Turunen: "Puoluekoululta New Yorkista." *Eteenpäin*, 25.2.1928. For black attendance in a predominantly Finnish educational course in Minneapolis, see image #453 ("Young Workers League Course, Minneapolis, Minnesota, c. 1927") in Työmies Records, Photographs, in the Finnish-American collection, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.

706 Interview with Ernest Koski by Paul Buhle. 31 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

707 *Taistelu oikeistovaaraa vastaan. Kominternin opetuksia Amerikan suomalaiselle työväelle.* Amerikan suom. sos. kustannusliikkeiden liitto: Superior [1930], p. 32. For criticisms of Finnish communists' lack of internationalism, see, for example, Aino: "Monessen, Pa." *Työmies* 25.1.1930.

708 Marsha Penti: "The Life History of a Southeastern Massachusetts Finnish Cranberry Growing Community." In Michael G. Karni (ed.): *Finnish Diaspora II: The United States.* The Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto 1981, pp. 87–106. I thank Marsha Penti for providing me information about Finns and Cape Verdeans at Massachusetts cranberry bogs.

1920s and early 1930s, labor relations in the bogs became increasingly tense as the seasonal berry pickers protested against irregular wage schemes, low pay and lack of union recognition.[709] The communists had a relatively strong presence among the area's Finns, and when labor relations between bog owners and berry pickers became strained in the early 1930s, the Finnish communists hoped they could lead an interracial campaign of industrial action against the employers. West Wareham's Finnish communists reported in 1931 that "Negro workers are in the majority here in many work places. We are in touch with them every day, which is why we need to put our ideas into practice in speech and action. Only this way can we win the confidence of the Negro workers, and when we have their confidence, we can show them the way to the front of the class struggle."[710] Another article in *Eteenpäin* reflected on the intensifying labor strife in the bogs, and explicated the challenges of labor organization in the area. Among these challenges the writer identified the "mistrust" that Cape Verdean workers had in communist unionizing. The writer also remarked that communists should stress their demand for equal pay for white and Cape Verdean workers in order to win over the latter group's trust.[711]

When labor tension led to strikes in 1931, 1933 and 1934, the Finnish communists were surprised, as it was the Cape Verdeans, not the supposedly enlightened Finnish communists, who led the strike. What made matters worse, Finns by and large stood on the sidelines. A local communist complained that "Now that the colored workers are marching in the front, Finnish workers should also act accordingly." Alas, they did not: "We used to always say that once we got the blacks to go along with us, we would know what to do. Unfortunately, it is now common to hear people say

709 *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture.* Department of Labor Bulletin No. 836. United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C. 1945, p. 358.

710 Seth Kallio & Elmer Lahtinen: "West Warehamin opintokerhon lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksessä." *Eteenpäin*, 5.3.1931.

711 "Maatyöläisten Union järjestäminen Cape Codilla." *Eteenpäin*, 25.8.1931.

that 'this is the blacks' strike.'"[712] Another disappointed Cape Cod Finn voiced the following query: "I would like to ask Finnish workers, where is your militancy now?"[713]

Indeed, why did the militant communists, so sure of their enlightened superiority over less enlightened African immigrants, not assume leadership in the strikes? Racial strife was hardly an issue: oral history material from both Cape Cod Finns and Cape Verdeans has stressed the groups' amicable relations. Finns and *purkiisit* "got along fine," a local Finn reminisced in the 1970s, using a Finnicized word for "Portuguese" in order to describe the Cape Verdeans. He added: "Why shouldn't they get along? They were all doing the same damn crappy work."[714] Cape Verdeans, too, described the relationship as having been amicable: "The Finnish were always there. They were friends. Two groups pretty much on the same plane. So many were such good friends and neighbors. And we lived like a family too."[715] Yet, while oral history material tends to stress that Finns and Cape Verdeans were on the "same plane," this was not entirely true: Southwestern Massachusetts was far from immune to Jim Crow.

By the 1920s, Plymouth County Finns had ascended in the local labor hierarchy, while the Cape Verdeans were being held back by racial segregation. A Cape Verdean construction worker recalled "There were a lot of problems. The prejudice was not like in the South. Down South, it's more open. Up here, it's not in the open and that's more difficult to deal with."[716] Banks denied the

712 Paikkakuntalainen: "Karpalopoimijain lakko ja sen opetukset." *Eteenpäin*, 30.9.1933.

713 Tähystäjä: "Havaintoja Cape Codin karpalonpoimijain lakosta." *Eteenpäin*, 22.9.1933.

714 Quoted in Penti 1981, p. 90. See also Penti 1981, pp. 101-102.

715 Quoted in Marilyn Halter: *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860–1965.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana & Chicago 1993, p. 122.

716 Quoted in Halter 1993, p. 123. A Finnish informant of Penti made much the same observation: "[The Cape Verdeans] knew where their place was. There was a segregation. It wasn't like segregation down South; but they knew better than to push ahead from their own area, their own sections

Cape Verdeans credit, which is why they could not buy bogs, and employers hesitated to promote them to higher positions. Finns, on the other hand, were not limited by the color bar and could ascend more freely. In the 1920s, many Finnish cranberry pickers were promoted to being foremen, or were able to buy their own bogs and become employers themselves. They sometimes adopted racist attitudes towards the Cape Verdeans. One Finnish bog owner, for example, later remarked: "[M]any of the Cape Verdeans were not the kind of worker that a Finn would want to have."[717] Housing was also segregated in many places. A 1936 article in *Cranberries* magazine compared one Plymouth County village to Southern plantations, complete with a distinct color line: "Cape Verdeans […] are housed on one side of the street. The other side is for those of the white race. Finnish workers and a few Yankees."[718] Thus, when labor militancy flared up in Plymouth County in the early 1930s, Cape Verdeans and Finns were in distinctly different positions in the local labor hierarchy. The racialized labor hierarchies also gave the industrial action a racialized character.

That Finnish communists could inflate their own importance and overlook the organizational abilities of Cape Verdeans was a result of a variety of factors. It partly reflected what many believed was the failed labor union policy of the communists during the ultra-leftist Third Period era. Their insistence that berry pick-

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... because it wasn't done … They had their own little streets or their own little parts of town where they lived and most of them worked on the cranberry bogs and this is all they knew … And they had their own clubs and dances and their own, well they didn't have their own church 'cause whites would go to the Catholic church, too. But there was some segregation, definitely." Penti 1981, p. 90.

717 Quoted in Penti 1981, p. 94. See also p. 96. On the other hand, many Finnish bog owners did employ Cape Verdeans and were congenial towards their employees. Some learned to speak Creole Portuguese in order to communicate with their workers and were firm supporters of racial equality. Personal communication with Marsha Penti, January 3, 2015.

718 "Model Village for Bog Workers Being Built by a Massachusetts Grower." *Cranberries*, Vol. 1, No. 8, p. 6.

ers should abandon the AFL's established labor organization and join the communists' Trade Union Unity League was as estranged from reality in Massachusetts cranberry bogs as it was in so many other industries in America.[719] Most Cape Verdean berry pickers were seasonal workers, who drifted back to towns and cities during the off-season. In urban areas, they tended to work as common laborers on construction sites or as longshoremen in docks. Indeed, much of the unskilled and semiskilled urban labor force in cities like New Bedford and Providence consisted of Cape Verdeans. In these urban trades, Cape Verdeans were generally well unionized. Area locals of the International Hod Carriers, the Building and Common Laborers' Union and the International Longshoremen's Association all had a substantial Cape Verdean membership. The principle officers and over half of the rank and file of the ILA's Providence local, for example, were "Bravas."[720] The ultra-leftist union policy of the communists would have required that these unionized workers drop their previous affiliations in well-established organizations and endorse an ultra-leftist union with little to show by way of actual achievements. It was a pipe-dream to say the least.

But ultra-leftist unionism alone does not explain the patronizing tone Finnish communists adopted towards the Cape Verdeans, which led the former to assume that they would have to show the "Negro workers" the "way to the front of the class struggle."[721] Rather, the paternalism shown by the Finns reflected the leftist conception of civilizational hierarchy, which implicitly cast Finnish workers as more enlightened and more capable of organizing than non-European, non-white workers. These con-

719 Fraser M. Ottanelli: *The Communist Party of the United States: From Depression to World War II*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick 1991, pp. 21–28.

720 *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture*, p. 358. Massachusetts Cape Verdeans were often called "Bravas" since most originated from the island of Brava.

721 Seth Kallio & Elmer Lahtinen: "West Warehamin opintokerhon lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksessä." *Eteenpäin*, 5.3.1931.

ceptions were not novel. The disappointment displayed by Finnish radicals to "blacks" assuming the leadership of a strike that was supposed to have been led by Finns was strikingly similar in Massachusetts in the 1930s as it had been in 1916 in Minnesota. But in the Communist Party, such civilizational hierarchies and the implicit chauvinism that they reflected came under sustained assault for the first time.

4.3. Finnish Communists and the Anti-Chauvinist Struggle

In December 1930, the editors of *Työläisnainen* ["The Working Woman"][722] set out to clarify the meaning of a word that had apparently caused some puzzlement among the paper's readership. The editors explained that "When people in America talk of 'white chauvinism, they mean the white population's racial braggadocio, which especially manifests itself as foolish contempt for the Negro population." While the editors acknowledged that the word was perhaps new to many of their Finnish readers, they insisted that every Finnish worker worth his or her revolutionary credentials should become familiar with it: "It is the principle of the *Työläisnainen*'s editorial policy to avoid any unnecessary usage of 'strange' words, but at the same time introduce its readers to those 'strange' words that are part of an all-round proletarian education. Chauvinism and chauvinist are words whose meaning everybody should understand because they will come across [these words] when reading their newspapers."[723]

And come across these words they did. The explanation of the "strange word" chauvinism in the communist women's magazine to perplexed readers was part of a larger campaign that was waged in the early 1930s by the communist press in the United States. It was the goal of the communist leadership to educate their rank-and-file on the importance of racial solidarity and

722 The communist women's newspaper *Toveritar* changed its name to *Työläisnainen* in 1930.

723 "Nicolas Chauvin." *Työläisnainen*, 31.12.1930.

the viciousness of racial intolerance. More than any other majority-white leftist organization in U.S. history, the Communist Party assaulted all forms of racial chauvinism, as they staunchly believed it to be detrimental to the working-class cause. Historians have debated whether this urge to fight racism emerged more from the grassroots or from the Moscow-affiliated party leadership. Early Cold War-era historians tended to emphasize the role of Moscow in directing the policies of its American affiliate. Militant anti-racism was something that Moscow expected from its often less-than-enthusiastic American supporters.[724] Historians affiliated with the New Left were more inclined to stress the initiative of grassroots activists: radical policies on race were developed *despite*, not because of, Moscow's bureaucratic control.[725] Mark Solomon has found problems in both interpretations: overt emphasis on Moscow's role neglects the role of black activists, in particular, in pushing the party towards a more militant form of anti-racism. Still, the Communist International did apply pressure that made the party leadership more attentive to this black critique. Thus, the push towards an ever more militant form of anti-racism within the U.S. party was a combination of the agitation of American activists and pressure from Comintern.[726]

The first major push for Finnish communists to examine that national and racial chauvinism that was in their midst came with the U.S. Communist Party's reorganization in 1924–1925. The reorganization, or Bolshevization in contemporary parlance, meant the restructuring of the U.S. party on the Russian Bolshevik Party model: interethnic and interracial shop and street cells would replace the old-fashioned language federations that had been brought to the party as a crossover from the Socialist Party. The Finnish Federation was by far the largest of the party's im-

724 See, for example, Theodore Draper: *American Communism and Soviet Russia: The Formative Period.* The Viking Press: New York 1960, pp. 315–356.

725 See, for example, Mark Naison: *Communists in Harlem during the Depression.* University of Illinois Press: Urbana 2005.

726 Solomon 1998.

migrant federations: with its 6,800 members, it comprised some 45% of the party membership. Thus, its reorganization became a bitterly-contested process. Many in the federation were unwilling to lose control of their halls and other property, while others insisted that the greater Bolshevik cause demanded that the separate Finnish federation be abolished and Finns join the other nationalities in shop and street cells. The Communist International became involved in this process, and the Moscow-based Communist Party of Finland sent its envoy, Yrjö Sirola, to convince his compatriots in America of the necessity of Bolshevization. After a long and bitter debate, the federation decided to abolish itself at its 1925 convention and advised its members to join the Communist Party as individual members. Few did. The party lost some 80% of its Finnish membership. Some of the damage was alleviated in 1927, when the Finnish Workers Federation, which was party-controlled but not directly party-affiliated, was established. It gathered most non-party Finnish communists under its wings, but this damage-control exercise was only partially successful. The Bolshevization debate resulted in a deep level of distrust between rank and file Finnish communists and the party leadership.[727]

After the Bolshevization debate, party loyalists in the communist press started to allude to how anti-Semitism was behind the rank and file's distrust of the party leadership. In a 1928 text, Henry Puro, who had distinguished himself as the chief proponent of Bolshevization and had gained a position in the Party Politburo soon thereafter, noted that anti-Jewish attitudes had played a large role in the opposition to party restructuring. Many Finnish comrades, he suggested, had been afraid that Jewish party leaders would take possession of their halls and other property, and

727 On a more detailed account of the heavily contested Bolshevization process, see Auvo Kostiainen: "The Finns and the Crisis Over 'Bolshevization' of the Worker's Party in 1924–25." In Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups & Douglas J. Ollila (eds.): *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives*. Migration Studies C3. Institute of Migration: Turku 1975, pp. 171–185.

had thus opposed the abolition of the federation.[728] This issue was also commented on in the communist newspapers *Työmies* and the newly-founded *Eteenpäin*. There was a disturbing strain of anti-Semitism among Finnish-American communists, the papers complained, which especially manifested itself as distrust towards the party's purportedly Jewish leadership.[729]

Indeed, the relationship of Finnish-American radicals to Jewish immigrants, who were the other major immigrant group within American socialist and communist organizations, had been ambivalent for a long time. In part, this ambivalence was a carry-over from the Old World. In the early twentieth century, the socialist press in Finland was one of the key critics of Jewish discrimination in Finland, with the Helsinki-based Social Democratic Party organ *Työmies* being an especially vocal proponent of Jewish civil rights. Pogroms against Jews in Tsarist Russia were also widely condemned and used as examples of the empire's backward nature.[730] Many journalists in the Finnish-American radical press had cut their teeth working in the socialist press of Finland and could thus draw on this experience when confronting anti-Semitism in the United States. Reflecting on this issue, K. A. Suvanto, the popular Finnish-American journalist and cartoonist, recalled that the socialist editor of Helsinki's *Työmies*, Yrjö Mäkelin, taught him that it was "never becoming of a workers' newspaper to mimic the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the bourgeoi-

728 Henry Puro: "Amerikan kommunistinen liike ja suomalaiset siinä." In *Lehtipaja. Työmiehen neljännesvuosisatajulkaisu*. Työmies Society: Superior 1928, p. 98.

729 [K. A. Suvanto]: "Työmiestä vastaan suunnatut provokatooriset syytökset", *Eteenpäin*, 18.3.1928; [Matti Wiitala]: "Kansainvälisyys." *Eteenpäin*, 4.5.1928; –i –n, "Kaikuja 'juutalaisten' konventsionista", *Eteenpäin*, 20.6.1928; "Suomalaiset ja juutalaiset runnaavat maailmaa." *Työmies*, 2.9.1928.

730 Jani Hanski: *Juutalaisviha Suomessa*. Ajatus kirjat: Helsinki 2006, p. 54; Taimi Torvinen: *Kadimah. Suomen juutalaisten historia*. Otava: Helsinki 1989, 84–85.

sie or to slander anyone because of their Jewishness."[731] In the United States, the Finnish socialist press extended high praise to their Jewish comrades, who were extolled for their progressiveness and intellectualism. In a 1917 article on New York's Jewish community, Santeri Nuorteva, for instance, extolled Jewish intellectualism, progressivism and their staunch commitment to socialism, while, at the same time, making much of the strangeness of Jewish neighborhoods in New York.[732]

Early twentieth-century Finland, where the socialist immigrants to the United States had grown up, was not free of anti-Semitism. Finland had a small Jewish population that was mainly concentrated in the southern cities of Helsinki, Turku and Vyborg, where they worked in a variety of trades. Most had arrived from Russia during the nineteenth century, and lacked citizenship rights until 1918. In fact, Finland was among the last countries in Europe to grant full citizenship rights to its Jewish population.[733] Thus, suspicions of and outright hostility towards Jews was something the Finnish immigrants may have brought with them to the United States from the Old Country. This is well illustrated in one WPA informant's reminiscences of his travel to the United States on a carrier full of different European nationalities: "The immigrants consisted mainly of Russians, Swedes and Finns. The Russians and Jews were ostracized on this boat. Because of the similarity of their cultural life, the Swedes and the Finns intermingled. They held dances on the deck every day. Also they had athletic contests such as tug-of-war, weight-lifting,

731 [K. A. Suvanto]: "Työmiestä vastaan suunnatut provokatooriset syytökset." *Eteenpäin*, 18.3.1928.

732 Santeri Nuorteva: "New Yorkin 'Palestiinaa.'" *Säkeniä*, Vol. 11, No. 8, August 1917, pp. 352–359.

733 This happened only after Finland's independence in 1918. On the history of Jews in Finland, see Torvinen 1989. On anti-Semitism's history in Finland, see Hanski 2006; Simo Muir: "Modes of Displacement: Ignoring, Understanding, and Denying Antisemitism in Finnish Historiography." In Simo Muir & Hana Worthen (eds.): *Finland's Holocaust: Silences of History.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2013, pp. 46–68.

etc."[734] It seems evident that many Finnish immigrants arrived in the United States with preconceived ideas about Jewish (and Russian) alienness.

Indeed, even the most vicious stereotypes of Jews were not repudiated by some Finnish-American socialist writers. In Finnish-American socialist rhetoric, the caricature of a Jewish merchant was sometimes used as shorthand for a greedy capitalist. John Välimäki, for example, compared exploitative European missionaries in Asia to "some Jewish owner of a pawn shop who has just been given a chance to extort some poor person."[735] More explicit anti-Semitic texts were also be published by Finnish-American leftist newspapers. An exceptionally blatant example is Kalle Rissanen's satirical short story "Salomon Isascarson," which was published in the socialist literary journal *Säkeniä* in September 1917. The story's protagonist was a sly Jewish merchant, who commits insurance fraud and uses his mischievous nature to get away with it. The story was riddled with allusions to anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and is replete with vile and dehumanizing language. Rissanen, for example, referred to the protagonist as a spider and noted that the financial world was a "nest of great poisonous spiders."[736] Equation of Jews with spiders

734 Interview with Henry Kainula by Walter Kykyri. 19 December 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

735 John Välimäki: "Kertomuksia Aasiasta." *Raivaaja*, 25.6.1908.

736 Kalle Rissanen: "Salomon Isascarson." *Säkeniä*, Vol. 11, No. 9, September 1917, pp. 390–396. The character of a greedy, mischievous Jewish merchant emerged in Rissanen's other literary work as well. See, for example, Kalle Rissanen: *Amerikan suomalaisia*. Amerikan suom. sos. kustannusliikkeet: Superior 1924, pp. 57, 101–102. One short story in this collection tells of a White Finnish sergeant who immigrates to America after the Civil War in Finland. When seeking employment in a bank, the man proudly boasts of Finland's anti-Jewish legislation without understanding that the man he speaks to – as well as most American business owners – are Jewish. Here, Rissanen ridicules the Finnish bourgeoisie's ignorant anti-Semitism, but himself reinstates the anti-Semitic notion that all of America's banks and business life is in Jewish hands. See Rissanen 1924, pp. 58–59.

was a common trope in European and American anti-Semitic discourse. Rissanen's short story was exceptional in its blatant, unabashedly vicious anti-Semitism, but its publication in a widely-circulated socialist journal testifies to a degree of complacency that went far beyond an individual writer. The editors of the socialist journal, and undoubtedly many of its readers, could brush off vile and dehumanizing depictions of Jews if they were branded as satirical humor.[737]

In the Finnish-American communist movement of the late 1920s, this casual anti-Semitism became increasingly untenable. The journalist and cartoonist K.A. Suvanto noted that the "Jewish worker is our class brother, and a Jewish oppressor is our class enemy; but even the Jewish oppressors we don't fight against because of their nationality, but because they are oppressors."[738] In a 1928 article, the editor-in-chief of *Eteenpäin*, Matti Wiitala, lashed out against the chauvinistic tendencies among Finnish-American communists, which especially manifested themselves as a disdain for the communist movement's Jewish and Russian leadership. He declared: "[I]n the communist movement we have only communist leadership, not any nationally specific leaderships. If a Jew is a communist, or if a Russian, or an American, or a Finn, or anyone else is [a communist], we treat them as communist comrades." It was a thoroughly anti-communist position to maintain that any race or nationality should be excluded from working class organizations because of their "racial or inherent characteristics." He argued that it was the revolutionary credentials of each individual that counted. In the end, Wiitala reminded readers that nationalities and races would not survive the purgatory fires of the proletarian revolution: "It should be always remembered

737 On the history of antisemitism in European leftist thinking, see Robert Fine & Philip Spencer: *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question.* Manchester University Press: Manchester 2017.

738 [K. A. Suvanto]: "Työmiestä vastaan suunnatut provokatooriset syytökset." *Eteenpäin*, 18.3.1928; *Työmies*.

that all nationalisms, also Finnishness, will have to be sacrificed on the altar of revolution."[739]

While this early attack on the racial intolerance of Finnish communists was penned before the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and the campaign against white chauvinism, its fiery rhetoric was an indicator of things to come. Racial hatred was not framed by the author as a simple issue of tolerance, but as a bourgeois and fascist influence on the working class. Those workers infected with it were deemed to be among the pariah class of enemies of the revolutionary cause. Noting that anti-Jewish sentiments were everywhere instigated by the most reactionary of societal elements – the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S., czarism in pre-revolutionary Russia, Miklós Horthy in contemporary Hungary, and so on – the writer charged that "the workers relying on nationalistic sentiments" easily became co-conspirators with these anti-worker elements. To make his point, the writer declared that the instigation of "nationalistic hatred" was a "service to the bourgeoisie," while the instigation of "nationalistic and racial prejudices" among one's fellow workers was "a crime against the workers' movement."[740] At the time of the writing, the U.S. Communist Party had not yet waged a fully-fledged campaign against chauvinism within its ranks. Wiitala's rhetoric indicates that there were people within the Finnish-American communist press and leadership for whom the coming campaign against rank-and-file chauvinism did not require much convincing.

Accusations of anti-Semitism also became a weapon in the increasingly fratricidal culture of the Finnish-American communist movement. When Elis Sulkanen, the editor of *Eteenpäin* and a long-time leftwing activist, was expelled from the Communist Party for being a Trotskyist in early 1929, his inadequate attention to "anti-Jewish tendencies" among Finnish communists was cited as one reason for this decision. Sulkanen claimed, under interrogation, that he had written "many articles against anti-Jewish ide-

739 [Matti Wiitala]: "Kansainvälisyys." *Eteenpäin*, 4.5.1928.

740 [Matti Wiitala]: "Kansainvälisyys." *Eteenpäin*, 4.5.1928.

ology" and denied that there were any "anti-Jewish tendencies" within the Finnish Federation. He also claimed that the problem had been exaggerated: "Some people [in the Finnish Federation] might say 'I don't like the Jews,' but that doesn't have any special meaning."[741] The Communist Party was just beginning its assault on racial chauvinism within its ranks, and consequently this kind of disregard for the issue proved to be endemic in the Finnish Federation. The Communist Party's militant insistency that such complacency be rooted out made this disregard increasingly indefensible.

The decisions taken at the Communist International's Sixth Congress in Moscow in 1928 had a major impact on the American communists' approach to chauvinism within its ranks. The Congress convened in the midst of Stalin's struggle against the "right-wing" Bukharinite faction of the Soviet Communist Party. The Congress was from the start characterized by ideological puritanism of the strictest variety, with unceasing attacks from the Congress pulpit against any and all "right-wing deviations" within the Communist International. Global capitalism was about to enter the so-called third period of post-World War development, the delegates at the Congress argued, which required that communists everywhere wage a relentless attack against liberals and social democrats – or "social fascists" in communist parlance – as they were seen as the sole bulwark still propping up the false trust of workers in capitalism. American communists were also required to struggle against right-wing deviations, but the Congress also marked a shift in their position on the so-called Negro question. The Congress adopted a statement calling for the total self-determination of American blacks in those areas of the South (the so-called Black Belt) where black people made up the majority of the population. This proposition, based as it was on Stalinist nationality conceptions, was initially prepared by Soviet nationality theoreticians with the help of Harry Haywood, a black American communist. The Colonial Commission, headed

741 "Otteita Sulkasen ja toisten suomalaisten opportunistien ja trotskilaisten kuulustelupöytäkirjasta." *Eteenpäin*, 17.1.1929.

by the Finn Otto Wille Kuusinen, supported the self-determination clause, despite the opposition of American delegates. The Congress also required that American communists elevate the struggle for black rights so that it was the most important aspect of their political work.[742]

However, the implementation of these Comintern instructions proved difficult. Black party functionaries around the country reported patronizing and dismissive attitudes toward "Negro work," and outright racial harassment from their white comrades in cells and in party-affiliated organizations. Immigrant communists were especially implicated. The Detroit chapter of the Jewish Workers Club, for instance, was faced with such allegations when a group of newly recruited black communists had been turned away from a party meeting organized at the club's premises. In the summer of 1930, Lithuanian communists in Chicago faced similar criticism from the party leadership, when a communist manager of a Lithuanian restaurant was accused of not serving food to black delegates attending an Unemployed Council meeting in his establishment.[743] Frustrated with these seemingly continuous incidents of "white chauvinism," many black communist veterans sought to pressure the party leadership to take a more active stance against intra-party racism. Cyril Briggs wrote a series of articles concerning the matter, while the Moscow-based Harry Haywood lobbied the Comintern. In October 1930, the Finnish Comintern leader, Otto Wille Kuusinen, urged Ameri-

742 Solomon 1998, pp. 68–81. Otto Wille Kuusinen had never visited the U.S. himself. When Kuusinen's wife, Aino Kuusinen, returned to Moscow from her stay in the United States in 1933, O. W. Kuusinen was, according to his wife's account, "strikingly disappointed" upon hearing from her that the Comintern accounts on "the Negro problem" in the U.S. were "exaggerated" and that "the colored people in Harlem had their own restaurants and clubs, their own cars, and usually a good wardrobe." Aino Kuusinen: *Jumala syöksee enkelinsä. Muistelmat vuosilta 1919–1965*. Otava: Helsinki 1972, p. 138.

743 Solomon 1998, 138–139. See also "Päätöslauselma jonka liettualainen piiriburoo hyväksyi valkoisesta shouvinismista", *Eteenpäin*, 30.9.1930.

can communists to do their utmost to purge the party of white chauvinists.[744]

Kuusinen also instructed his communist compatriots in America to work harder to eradicate white chauvinism when a group of Finnish-American communist leaders visited Moscow in the fall of 1930.[745] His wife, Aino Kuusinen, who was sent to the United States in 1930 in order to direct the Finnish-American communist movement in its struggle against "right-wing" tendencies in the co-operative movement, also demanded that Finnish communists in America do more in the struggle for black rights.[746] Indeed, such instructions were needed. Many Finnish-American communists were decidedly unwilling to take seriously the Comintern policy on the race question. To be sure, many communist Finns took part in political campaigns, such as fundraising for the southern communist newspaper *Southern Worker*,[747] and newspapers publicized interracial workers' events in Chicago, Detroit, New York and elsewhere.[748] But what proved especially hard for many was the Comintern's insistence that American communists should not only work with blacks in the political sphere, but that they should also associate with them socially. The party leadership and the Comintern insisted that dances, sports competitions and other social events, alongside protest meetings and demonstrations, should be open to black participants. Conflict ensued as

744 Solomon 1998, 84, 129–137.

745 Henry Puro: "Neekerikysymys Yhdysvalloissa." *Viesti*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1931, p. 430. Puro, who met Kuusinen in Moscow, paraphrased Kuusinen's message to Finnish-American communists: "I believe that we can be certain that the struggle for Negro rights in America will in the near future become one of the major political issues in America."

746 Ahola 1980, pp. 204–205.

747 SKT: "Tarvitaanko etelässä kommunistista viikkolehteä?" *Työmies*, 8.2.1930; "Haasteet etelään perustettavan lehden hyväksi." *Työmies*, 5.3.1930; "Rynnäkkö kommunistisen viikkolehden Etelään perustamiseksi käynnissä." *Työmies*, 27.3.1930.

748 See, for example, "Chicago, Ill." *Työmies*; "Protestikokous Detroitissa." *Työmies*; "Valkoiset ja tummaihoiset työläiset rotusortoa vastaan." *Työmies*, 27.7.1931.

more black members began to take an interest in communist-organized activities in localities with a large Finnish-American presence. In August 1930, a group of Finnish attendees at a Labor Sports Union (LSU) summer camp near Detroit harassed three black women who were seeking to attend an educational course for LSU's women officials. The other participants of the educational class staged a discussion on "the relationship between Negro workers and white-skinned workers in class struggle" and condemned the chauvinist behavior of their compatriots in a statement sent to the Finnish-American communist press.[749] Yet, similar incidents continued unabated in other localities, especially in New York City. There was clearly a wider problem of white chauvinism among Finnish-American radicals.

Nowhere did these problems come to the fore more forcefully than in Harlem in New York City. Finnish Harlem was bordered by 120th and 130th streets and by Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue. In its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s the area was populated by some 9,000 Finns. The community was politically divided between conservatives and radicals, but the latter group were also splintered. When the Finnish Socialist Federation split, New York had been one of the most bitterly contested cities between socialists and communists. Finnish radicals fought to control ownership of the workers' hall on the corner of 127th Street and Fifth Avenue. The hall remained in socialist hands, with the communists being forced to build their own hall nearby on 126th Street.[750] The area of Harlem populated by Finns was generally white, with Italian, Irish and Jewish migrants making up most of the surrounding non-Finnish population.[751] Black Harlem was only blocks away, and as the Communist Party began to make headway among this neighborhood's population, black communists started to be a more common sight at the Labor Temple, the Finnish

749 "Päätöslauselma valkoisesta shovinismista", *Työmies*, 15.8.1930; "Resolution on White Chauvinism," *Eteenpäin*, 17.8.1930. "Detroit, Mich. Toimintauutisia Loon-järveltä", *Työmies,* 13.9.1930.

750 Syrjälä 1925, pp. 200–201; Mattson 1949, p. 107.

751 Tommola 1988, pp. 113–115.

communists' hall on 126th street. The hall was used by New York communists to host meetings and other political events,[752] but it was also a popular place of leisure for the neighborhood's Finnish workers, who patronized the hall for its famous sauna, swimming pool and the many dances that were organized on its premises. The increasing black presence at these social events emerged as a major problem.

Many Finnish communists had no discernible problem in proclaiming their theoretical belief in racial equality. Yet, the reality of working with blacks at political events, dances, sauna-gatherings and other such social events was a different matter completely. One Harlem communist reflected on this discrepancy between theory and practice in Finns' racial views: "We Finns have bragged how each and every one of us recognizes the negroes as our equals. Word of this reached a few Negroes in the Party and they of course decided to come over and test us. What this testing revealed was that we were not, after all, conscious of ourselves and we could not, therefore, deal with the experiment."[753] Indeed, this "testing" revealed the practice of strict, if implicit, racial segregation at the Labor Temple. Black visitors to the hall were turned away at times and, if allowed inside, they were greeted with suspicious looks and racial taunting. The black communists were not the first to discover this color bar at New York's Finnish workers' halls. When Rosa Emilia Clay, a Finnish-American socialist, actress and singer of Ovambo descent, first visited New York's Finnish workers' hall in 1904, some Finnish men wanted to throw "the strange Negro" outside. It was only when they learned she could speak fluent Finnish that their attitudes changed.[754] Now that the Finnish radicals' mother organization, the Communist Party, was not willing to tolerate any color bar in the radicals' social life, these implicitly-tolerated practices of racial exclusion came to the fore and had to be addressed.

752 Naison 2005, p. 43.

753 Jusupoffi: "New Yorkin S.T. Yhdistyksen kokouksesta," *Eteenpäin*, 16.1. 1931.

754 Lindewall 1942, pp. 92–93.

In November 1930, the monitor of the Labor Temple's pool table room had "barred a Negro worker from playing pool with a white worker." Consequently, the issue of racial discrimination at the hall was brought up for the first time at a meeting of the Finnish Workers' Federation's New York branch. The hour-and-a-half-long discussion on the issue revealed a gap between an abstract belief in racial equality and a practical unwillingness to associate with black Harlemites. According to a report on the meeting published in *Eteenpäin*, every participant "unanimously recognized the equality of all workers regardless of race," but, at the same time, "wondered what will happen to our hall's attendance figures if greater numbers of blacks start to frequent it." While Finnish communists were willing to profess their belief in racial equality in an abstract sense, there were fears that actual engagement with the neighborhood's black populace might drive away the Finnish clientele and hurt the financial profitability of the hall. Ultimately, the participants unanimously adopted a resolution stating the rights of every hall-goer to bring guests regardless of their race or color. It stopped short, however, of declaring that *any* black person could enter the hall.[755] Even those members who defended black inclusion assured the others that black people would not in any case become a frequent sight at the hall. Once the dust had settled, black activists would allow Finns to associate by themselves and everything would continue much as before.[756] These discussions revealed a large gap between how Finnish communists conceived of the issue of race and how the Communist Party in Harlem approached it. They also illustrate that Finnish communists in Harlem had not entirely appreciated how serious the party was about abolishing the intra-party color line. The party,

755 Jusupoffi: "New Yorkin yhdistyksen viimeisessä työkokouksessa keskusteltiin laajasti rotukysymyksestä", *Eteenpäin*, 15.11.1930; Minutes of the FWF's New York branch meeting. 9 November 1930. Finnish Workers Federation, New York, Papers. IHRC.

756 Jusupoffi: "New Yorkin yhdistyksen viimeisessä työkokouksessa keskusteltiin laajasti rotukysymyksestä", *Eteenpäin*, 15.11.1930; "Työväenyhdistyksen kokouksesta," *Eteenpäin*, 3.1.1931.

increasingly frustrated with its immigrant membership's intransigence, decided to make an example of the Harlem Finns as a warning to others.

4.4. Race Hatred on Trial: The Case of August Jokinen

In December 1930, three black men attending a dance at the Labor Temple were harassed by Finnish attendees, had their requests to dance spurned by Finnish women and were almost thrown out of the event. The *Daily Worker* was quick to react: the Finnish hall-goers had "joined hands with the bosses by refusing to dance with Negroes, refusing to permit them to remain in the ball and by threatening to gang up on them in an effort to force them to leave."[757] These were "harsh words, but on point," a columnist in *Eteenpäin* admitted. The chauvinistic behavior was a "disgrace to the spirit of the Labor Temple," and the columnist urged tougher educational actions in order to cleanse the Finnish members of the federation of any chauvinistic attitudes towards their black comrades.[758] But mere educational actions were becoming insufficient. The *Daily Worker* editorial had demanded that those who held white chauvinistic views – and those conciliatory towards such attitudes – should be made aware that their stance was incompatible with party membership.[759]

Ben Amis, a prominent black communist, argued that lukewarm apologies and insincere conciliatory gestures were simply not enough: "It is not enough to pass resolutions of protest a week later, after the deed is done and the culprits have gone some place else to continue their dirt. It is insufficient to have a Negro speaker come later to speak on the Negro question and thunderously applaud him. Mild criticisms and slow action to condemn white chauvinism do not demonstrate to Negro toilers that we

757 "Destroy White Chauvinism." *Daily Worker*, 4.12.1930.

758 "Valkoinen shouvinismi suomalaisten keskuudessa," *Eteenpäin*, 7.12.1930.

759 "Destroy White Chauvinism." *Daily Worker*, 4.12.1930.

are sincere in assuming the hegemony of the Negro liberation movement." The "mild-mannered" protestations of the Finnish Communists against their chauvinistic compatriots at the ball were simply insufficient. "Polluted functionaries" and those who refused to purge themselves of "bureaucratism and white superiority," Amis declared, should be expelled.[760] Amis' fiery rhetoric reflected the frustration of many black party members, who demanded that the party's white leadership do more to address the problem of chauvinism within the party.[761]

The December 1930 incident and the party leadership's strong reaction prompted Finnish communist leaders to take decisive actions against white chauvinism. The issue of "white chauvinism among Finnish workers" was brought up at a December meeting of the Executive Committee of the Finnish Workers' Federation.[762] Following this meeting, the Finnish Bureau of the CPUSA and New York's language bureau released a joint statement on "the Negro question," which was published in all Finnish-language communist dailies. The statement was based on a presentation delivered to the Finnish communist leadership on the racial question by Henry Puro, who had been a critic of anti-Semitic tendencies among Finnish communists after the Bolshevization campaign and who had since risen to the party's Politburo. Drawing on Puro's presentation and on the CPUSA's and Comintern's resolutions, the Finnish communist leaders decided to start "a vigorous fight" to secure full societal equality for blacks and for their right to self-determination in the South. The leaders acknowledged that white chauvinism represented the greatest barrier in the way of achieving these goals. They stated that

760 B.D. Amis: "Fight Against White Chauvinism." *Daily Worker*, 10.12.1930. The article was also published in *Eteenpäin* and *Työmies*. See "Taistelkaa valkoista shouvinismia vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 18.12.1930.

761 Solomon 1998, pp. 131–137; Harry Haywood: *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist*. Liberator Press: Chicago 1978, pp. 351–353.

762 "Selostus Järjestön Tpk:n kokouksesta joulukuun 13 p., 1930," *Eteenpäin*, 20.12.1930.

it was "one of the most egregious forms of opportunism" and "a bourgeoisie influence on the working class." Hence, they vowed to "mercilessly expose and condemn all manifestations of white chauvinism, and to fight most strongly for its eradication from the Finnish proletariat." They singled out New York Finns for especially harsh criticism. Discussions on the race question at the New York branch meeting had been plagued with "confused ideas" and muddled thinking. Harlem Finns had decided to allow Finnish members to bring their black comrades to the hall, but had implied that other black people were not welcome. The statement declared that this continued to put black patrons in a different position than their white comrades, and thus still maintained the Jim Crow bar.[763]

The leaders demanded that a special campaign against white chauvinism be initiated: Federation branches everywhere were required to call meetings to discuss the racial question. These meetings should be used, the leaders demanded, to "expose all manifestations of white chauvinism, to condemn them, and to root them out from Finnish activities."[764] This Finnish campaign was part of a broader assault on white chauvinism that the Communist Party Politburo initiated at its January 1931 meeting: districts were required to discuss the race question, issue resolutions and expel white chauvinists. The resolution of the CP's New York district in February 1931 declared: "Close Ranks Against Chauvinist Influences."[765]

The educational campaign was also fully initiated among Finnish communists. In February 1931, the communists' theoretical journal *Viesti* published Henry Puro's article on the "Negro ques-

763 "Yhd. Kommunistisen puolueen suomalaisen toimiston ja N.Y.:n piirin kieliosaston päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksessä", *Eteenpäin* & *Työmies*, 21.12.1930, *Toveri*, 22.12.1930.

764 "Yhd. Kommunistisen puolueen suomalaisen toimiston ja N.Y:n piirin kieliosaston päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksessä", Eteenpäin & Työmies, 21.12.1930; Toveri, 22.12.1930. See also Puro 1931, p. 429.

765 "Close Ranks Against Chauvinist Influences." *Daily Worker*, 19.2.1931; "Sulkekaa rivinne valkoshovinistisia vaikutteita vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 28.2.1931; *Työmies*, 28.2.1931; Haywood 1978, p. 353.

tion in the United States," which explained the Comintern position on the matter and explicated why Finns, too, should root out white chauvinism in their midst. Puro set out to explain the special dimensions of black oppression in America by separating the exploitation of blacks as workers from their oppression as a race and a nationality. Expounding that "the Negroes" – with their low wages, long hours and plight as sharecroppers – belonged "to the most exploited part of the working population," Puro further specified that they were "not only the most exploited part of the population in industry and agriculture" but "*also* an oppressed race and nationality." As an oppressed race/nation, blacks faced several forms of discrimination that were not extended towards white workers, thus making them the most oppressed of Americans. To make this point, Puro referred to the disenfranchisement of blacks in the South. He also pointed to their restricted access to housing and schooling, as well as Jim Crow policies that barred blacks from entering hotels, theaters and restaurants. He also highlighted how they faced restrictions on their movement, including segregated train cars. Lastly, he discussed lynching – "the cruelest manifestation of [this] capitalistic racial oppression" – as an example of the special forms of oppression and humiliation that blacks faced as a race and a nationality – not merely as a class – in the United States. While this racial oppression was at its most glaring in the South, Puro noted that it was "Everywhere in capitalist America [that] the Negro is treated as a contemptuous, inferior race."[766] Puro's account of the special oppression of blacks as a race in America was in line with the Communist Party's policy, and it sought to bring home to the Finnish radical readership the significance of race as an axis of oppression in America.[767]

The East Coast daily *Eteenpäin* also urged its readers to immediately begin to "raise the internationalist spirit" among Finnish workers as "excuses such as 'we don't have negroes in our midst'

766 Puro: "Neekerikysymys Yhdysvalloissa," p. 429. Italics added.

767 Henry Puro: "Neekerikysymys Yhdysvalloissa." *Viesti*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1931, pp. 428–431.

will not do."[768] During the spring of 1931 meetings to discuss the race question were held in several Finnish Workers Federation branches, mostly on the East Coast, but also in places like Hancock in Michigan. A total of sixteen resolutions subsequently appeared on the pages of *Eteenpäin* and *Työmies*. New York's Finnish Workers' Federation branch and its women's organization, for instance, issued resolutions in January. They conceded that they had been complicit in white chauvinism and vouched to root out all remnants of Jim Crow from their midst. Indeed, they made a special point to declare that it was "not becoming of a worker girl to refuse a request for a dance for racial or color reasons."[769]

Other resolutions followed the same formula. The statements reported that a discussion on "the racial and nationality question" had been conducted at a branch meeting and that the members had decided unanimously to back the Communist Party's and Comintern's stand on the matter.[770] Many of the resolutions contained long examinations on the history of racial oppression

768 "Suomalaisten työläisten kansainvälisyystuntoa kasvattamaan." *Eteenpäin*, 27.12.1930.

769 "New Yorkin Suomalaisen Työväenyhdistyksen päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksestä," *Eteenpäin*, 18.1.1931; *Työmies*, 23.1.1931; "New Yorkin alueen laajennetun naissihteeristön päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksestä", *Eteenpäin*, 23.1.1931; *Työläisnainen*; *Työmies*.

770 "Lanesvillen S.T. Yhdistyksen lausunto neekerikysymyksestä," *Eteenpäin*, 1.1.1931; "Massan alueen naissihteeristön lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 6.1.1931; "Fitchburgin naisjaoston lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Työläisnainen*, 11.2.1931; "Päätöslauselma rotu- ja kansainvälisyyskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 15.1.1931; "Warren, Ohio. Päätöslauselma." *Eteenpäin*, 16.1.1931; "Baltimoren, Md., Työväenyhdistyksen päätöslauselma lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 18.1.1931; "Maynardin naisjaoston päätöslauselma kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 25.1.1931; "Päätöslauselma kansallisuus- ja valkoshouvinismikysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 28.1.1931; "Päätöslauselma kansallisuus- ja valkoshouvinismikysymyksessä." *Eteenpäin*, 14.2.1931; *Työmies*, 18.2.1931; "Päätösponsi valkoisesta shovinismista." *Työmies*, 17.2.1931; "West Warehamin opintokerhon lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksessä." *Eteenpäin*, 5.3.1931; "Bostonin naisjaoston lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 5.3.1931; "Päätöslause rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1931; "Taistelu

in America, and illustrated a genuine engagement with the issue. Yet, while the resolutions always noted that they had been adopted unanimously, there was still squeamishness about the issue in many localities. An *Eteenpäin* correspondent, who was reporting from a meeting of the Brooklyn branch of the Federation in late December 1930, for example, observed that while the meeting's discussion on "the Negro question" had been "decorous and enlightening," for the most part, the issue remained "unclear for many comrades," who "forgot the class nature of the racial question" and whose opinions were "foreign to communism."[771] Another writer noted that while the many resolutions on "white patriotism" that had been issued by Finnish workers had been "decorous and good-intentioned, […] it must be confessed that the passing of those resolutions has caused stomach cramps among many comrades."[772]

One such comrade was August Jokinen, the janitor at Harlem's Labor Temple.[773] He had been present at the hall in December 1930, when Finns had harassed the three black men. Jokinen and other party members who had been present were summoned before the party's interrogatory committee. However, Jokinen was unapologetic about his behavior, unlike his comrades, and argued that the exclusion of blacks from the Finnish Hall was justified, since they might find their way to the bathing and sauna facilities. He, for one, "did not want to bathe with Negroes." Jokinen also argued that the admission of blacks would also result in financial losses for the hall because of reduced Finnish attendance. He was here voicing concerns that were common among Harlem's Finnish communists. Such unashamed chauvinism was unacceptable to the committee. However, mere expulsion was not deemed a suitable solution. Clarence Hathaway, the editor of the *Daily*

valkoshovinismia vastaan." *Työläisnainen*, 25.3.1931; "Trumanburgin S.T. lausunto rotukysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 16.5.1931.

771 "Työväenyhdistyksen kokouksesta," *Eteenpäin*, 3.1.1931.

772 "Välipaloiksi," *Eteenpäin*, 4.3.1931; *Työmies*, 11.3.1931.

773 In English-language sources Jokinen's name is spelled "Yokinen" for phonetic reasons.

Worker, suggested that a public show trial be organized against Jokinen. A similar political trial against white chauvinism had been organized by Soviet authorities in Stalingrad in August 1930 against two white American workers who had harassed their black comrade at a tractor factory. The trial was widely covered in the American communist press, and it left a lasting impression on Harry Haywood, the leader of the Communist Party in Harlem who had been present in the USSR at the time. He later reflected that "The incident was a dramatic affirmation by Soviet workers of their country's position on the question of race prejudice."[774]

Hathaway, Haywood and other New York communist leaders agreed that a similar trial should be held in Harlem. This would dramatically illustrate that the Communist Party was serious about combating the poisonous ideology of white supremacy for Harlem's black workers.[775] Jokinen was thus made an example of and the party staged a public show trial in Harlem in March 1931, in which Jokinen stood accused of white chauvinism in front of a "workers' jury" and an audience of some 1,500 Harlemites.[776]

The "Yokinen trial," as it was referred to in the U.S. press, took place on the first Sunday of March in the Harlem Casino, a large hall on 116th Street near Lenox Avenue, which had been a regular venue for party meetings and social events. The party advertised the trial in advance by distributing leaflets throughout Harlem.

774 Haywood 1978, p. 340. The Stalingrad trial had been covered also by the Finnish-American Communist press: "Amerikalainen näyttänyt 'sivistystään' Stalingradissa." *Työmies*, 14.8.1930; "Neekerin pieksäjät on asetettu syytteeseen." *Eteenpäin*, 19.8.1930; "Neekerivainooja asetettu syytteeseen." *Työmies*, 19.8.1930; "Amerikalaisen täytyy nöyrtyä Neuv.-liitossa." *Eteenpäin*, 23.8.1930. The political message of the trial was brought home in an *Eteenpäin* subtitle: "Racial hatred won't fly in the Soviet Union" (*Rotuviha ei vetele Neuvostoliitossa*).

775 Haywood 1978, p. 353.

776 CPUSA: *Race Hatred on Trial*. CPUSA: New York 1931, 8; Haywood 1979, pp. 353–358; Solomon 1998, p. 139. Similar attitudes and opinions had been criticized repeatedly in the Finnish-language communist press, testifying to their popularity. See, for example, "Työväenyhdistyksen kokouksesta," *Eteenpäin*, 3.1.1931; "Välipaloiksi," *Eteenpäin*, 4.3.1931 & *Työmies*, 11.3.1931.

Major mainstream newspapers and the black media also picked up on the story, giving much-wanted exposure to the communist position regarding full racial equality and self-determination for blacks in the Southern Black Belt.[777] The trial started with the formation of "a workers' jury," which was composed of fourteen workers, of whom seven were white and seven were black. Two of the white jurors were Finns.[778]

The actual trial began with the prosecution statement, read by Hathaway, who accused Jokinen of giving "expression to the white-superiority lies that have been developed consciously by the capitalists and Southern slave-owners." Hathaway went on to describe the wayward behavior of Jokinen and put it into the larger context of the American bourgeoisie's attack on black workers. Hathaway accused Jokinen of compromising the CPUSA position on race: "If Communist Party members had come to the defense of these Negro workers, had jumped at the throat of their persecutors and established their right to dance in this hall, to play pool, and even to bathe […] these Negro workers would have known that our promises about equality were not only words". Hathaway admitted that Jokinen was not to be indicted as an individual, since the views he had spouted had not been his alone. He had merely been acting "as a phonograph for the capitalists." Yet, Hathaway asserted that the restoration of the communists' revolutionary integrity still required the expulsion of Jokinen from the party.[779]

Jokinen's defense attorney, Richard B. Moore, who was the head of the Negro Department of the International Labor Defense, did not deny Jokinen's guilt, but sought to direct attention from individual considerations to the broader social context. It

777 See, for example, "Reds Here to Stage a 'Chauvinism' Trial", *New York Times*, 28.2.1931; "Race Equality Trial Stirs Harlem Reds", *The New York Times*, 2.3.1931; "Tov. Aug. Jokisen joukkokuulustelu herättää huomiota työläisten keskuudessa," *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1931.

778 CPUSA 1931, p. 5. Judging from their names, the jurors Toivonen and Lahti were Finns.

779 CPUSA 1931, 24.

was not only Jokinen who was on trial, Moore argued, but the entire capitalistic system that had led Comrade Jokinen astray and poisoned his mind with ideas of white superiority. Moore argued that capitalism worked to keep foreign-born workers, like Jokinen, insulated within their national communities, which made it hard for them to come into contact with communist literature on the race question. Pleading to the court to save "an honest but unenlightened worker" from the disgrace of expulsion, Moore argued that Jokinen should not be expelled but saved "for the Party and for the working class." After Moore's fiery speech, Jokinen made his own statement, translated to the court from Finnish, where he admitted his guilt and vowed to change. He asked the court not to revoke his party membership, pledging "to fight unflinchingly against all tendencies of white chauvinism among the workers, to fight for the social, political and economic equality of the Negroes and for the solidarity of the working class as a whole."[780] Despite these appeals, Jokinen was expelled from the party. He was only to be readmitted after showing his commitment in practice to racial equality. The trial ended with the crowd singing the Internationale.[781]

Immigration authorities arrested Jokinen soon after the trial. He had lived in the United States for thirteen years, but had not applied for citizenship. Thus, as a foreigner who had now been publically exposed as a Communist Party member, he was threatened with deportation. He was released to wait for the court's decision. He returned to Harlem and did his utmost to fulfil the promises he had given to the workers' court. Haywood later reminisced that Jokinen "became a familiar and popular figure on the streets of Harlem," speaking at Finnish communist events about the importance of the anti-chauvinist struggle, participating in demonstrations for black rights and assuming an important role in a campaign against the Jim Crow policies of a Harlem cafeteria. After six months, Jokinen was readmitted to the party "as one

780 CPUSA 1931, 38-39.

781 CPUSA 1931, 47; "Race Equality Trial Stirs Harlem Reds," *The New York Times*, 2.3.1931.

of the staunchest fighters for our program."[782] The International Labor Defense mounted a campaign to save Jokinen from deportation, but the campaign ultimately failed. He left America for Soviet Karelia with his wife and daughter in the spring of 1933. There, he became a worker at an auto repair shop. Whether he survived the Stalinist purges of 1937–38 against "nationalistic" and "fascist" Soviet Finns is unclear.[783]

4.5. Race, Gender and Finnishness: The Debate on the Jokinen Case

It was no coincidence that the Jokinen controversy started at a dance ball. The altercation between Finnish hall-goers and the three black men about interracial dancing was neither the first nor the last of its kind. The Communist Party insisted that its white members engage in closer social interaction in Harlem and elsewhere with their black comrades. Hence, dances emerged as especially contested events. The party and its youth organization staged interracial dances that often drew the ire of surrounding society, but also raised concerns among white party members—especially the men.[784] Harlem was not the only place where interracial dancing attracted anxieties among Finnish communists. In August 1931, a dance at a Finnish workers' hall in Minneapolis

782 Haywood 1978, p. 357.

783 In the fall of 1935, the socialist *Raivaaja* claimed that Jokinen had escaped Soviet Karelia and moved to Finland. He was said to have established a bus company in Tampere. The editors of *Raivaaja* noted gleefully that the communist hero had become a petty bourgeois business owner in fascist Finland. The communist *Eteenpäin* strongly denied Jokinen's defection, however, and insisted that he still worked at the Petrozavodsk auto repair shop in Soviet Karelia. They relayed Jokinen's greetings to Harlem's Finnish and black workers. See "Kirje August Jokiselle Petroskoissa." *Eteenpäin*, 20.9.1935. Jokinen's picture was featured in a book that celebrated Soviet Karelia's fifteenth anniversary, published in New York in 1935. See *Neuvosto-Karjalan 15-vuotiselta taipaleelta.* Finnish Federation: New York 1935.

784 Naison 2005, pp. 125–126.

held in honor of Karelia-bound Finnish workers almost erupted in a racial brawl. A local *Työmies* correspondent reported that a group of Finnish men had threatened to gang up on the few black guests in attendance because they were dancing with Finnish women. A full-on confrontation was only averted after the correspondent intervened. While the correspondent maintained that the men were "probably not *Työmies* readers," it was apparent that communist Finns were far from being immune to the gendered anxieties regarding interracial intimacy. The commentary on the Jokinen case revealed that it was just the gendered aspect that most ruffled the Finnish men's feathers.

Male indignation over intimate relations (real or imagined) between Finnish women and non-Finnish men was common in the Finnish immigrant community. As Johanna Leinonen has illustrated, interethnic relationships were frowned upon by many Finnish immigrants, but especially by men.[785] When the *New Yorkin Uutiset*, for example, started to publish letters from young people in a section called "Mail from youth" (*Nuorten posti*) in 1912, many young women wrote of their disillusionment with ill-mannered Finnish men. The women's discontent was met with male indignation. The then-editor of the paper, Matti Kurikka, castigated Finnish women for "a crime against the tribe" (*heimorikos*), while one reader voiced his disgust of "young Finnish girls," who danced "with 'dagoes' and all kinds of bearded men."[786] Many male immigrants saw this as an affront to their assumed control over "their" women, and found an outlet for their frustrated anger by showing contempt for Finnish women's exogamous relationships.

This was readily evident in the indignation of Harlem's Finns over the Communist Party's policy on race and the abolition of the Labor Temple's implicit color bar. What made this indignation especially potent was the insinuation that Finns should socialize and form intimate relations with a group—black Americans—

785 Leinonen 2014.

786 Ross 1981, pp. 249–250.

that was considered to be at the bottom of society's racial hierarchy. Finnish-American conservatives, who had for years been concerned by the racial association of Finns with Mongols, were particularly afraid that the Jokinen case would taint the image of Finns in the eyes of the Americans and again associate them with non-whiteness. In its commentary on the Jokinen case, the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset* ["The New York News"] concentrated almost solely on the troubling prospect of "social equality"—a coded phrase for sexual interactions between whites and blacks in contemporary American parlance. The newspaper's editors and columnists accused communists of forcing Finnish girls to dance with black men and ridiculed Finnish communists for submitting in front of the party's Jewish leadership and its "savage" black membership.[787] The Jokinen case was reported with similar anti-Semitic and anti-black glee in Finland, when a columnist for *Helsingin Sanomat* picked up on the story. The columnist made much of the unmanly kowtowing that Finnish communists had to do in front of their racial inferiors. New York's Finnish communists had been "ordered by Moscow's henchmen to kneel in dirt and ashes before negro communists and to kiss the toes of these blackamoors." [788]

The criticism of the socialist *Raivaaja* newspaper of communist race politics was mostly concerned with the threat of "race war" in Harlem. In its editorial comment, it depicted Harlem's black population as an easily excitable and impulsive group, which was under capitalist influence and that could be incited to attack whites without much effort. Communist incitement was ir-

787 Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo."*New Yorkin Uutiset*, 29.1.1931; "Kullakin on oma isänmaansa." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 31.1.1931; Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo." *New Yorkin Uutiset*. 5.3.1931; Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo." *New Yorkin Uutiset*. 12.3.1931; Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo." *New Yorkin Uutiset*. 28.3.1931; Johannes Wirtanen: "Neekerikysymys ja suomalaiset kommunistit." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 9.4.1931; Tahvo T.: "Tuli sanottua." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 23.4.1931.

788 Tiitus: "August Jokisen täytyy kylvettää mustia aateveljiä." *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8.4.1931.

responsible, the editors held.[789] They also accused the communists of exposing Jokinen to the federal immigration authorities, thereby threatening all Finnish radicals.[790] However, the socialists, like the conservatives, were also concerned about the social equality that the communists had purportedly imposed in their hall. *Raivaaja* claimed to support full political and economic equality between the races, but stopped short of going any further:

> Anti-racial socialist theory and ideals do not require the integration of social life in situations where all the historical, psychological, civilizational and habitual possibilities for it are lacking. A Finn and a Negro are like night and day. They cannot be made to socialize with each other."[791]

While the editorial did not spell out the issue explicitly, it was clear that the "socialization" feared by the socialists was between Finnish women and black men. In March 1931, a *Raivaaja* columnist made sardonic references to a "certain Finnish woman in Harlem," who had "followed the true communist line" by giving birth to "a negro-skinned baby."[792] In a commentary on the desegration of their Harlem hall, another socialist writer pondered whether "Finnish girls really want to dance with the blacks."[793] These anxieties over social equality built on the well-established trope of black men's sexual impulsiveness and violent assertiveness.

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789 "Rotukysymys ja suomalaiset," *Raivaaja*, 8.3.1931; "Valmistavatko kommunistit väkivaltaista hyökkäystä New Yorkin työväentaloa vastaan." *Raivaaja*, 24.3.1931; "Eräs tärkeä puoli rotuyhteys-kysymyksessä." *Raivaaja*, 10.4.1931; "Kommunistit menettelevät hullun lailla neekerikysymyksessä." *Raivaaja*, 2.9.1931.

790 "Pikku hoksautus." *Raivaaja*, 26.10.1931; "Eteenpäin 'Iskuri,' miten on August Jokisen asian laita?" *Raivaaja*, 26.10.1931.

791 "Rotukysymys ja suomalaiset," *Raivaaja*, 8.3.1931.

792 "Myöhästynyt vaara." *Raivaaja*, 27.3.1931.

793 Nixon: "Havaintoja Harlemista." *Raivaaja* 31.3.1931. See also "Muutamia tosiasioita suomalaisen kommunistisen järjestön sisäisistä asioista." *Raivaaja*, 23.9.1931.

The IWW's *Industrialisti* was not as preoccupied with the "social equality" aspect of the Jokinen case as socialist and conservative Finns. Rather, it bemoaned how the communists had replaced the category of class with that of race in their understanding of exploitation. Throughout the 1920s, the IWW newspaper's commentaries on the race question emphasized the class character of racial hatred. On the one hand, this class focus led the paper to denounce the racial anxieties about black southerners' migration to the North. In 1924, the editor Väinö Pelto reflected that "No Wobbly should feel concerned about the dark-skinned workers' migration to the north, but vice versa, it gives us many organizational opportunities."[794] On the other hand, the focus on economic class alone led them to frequently downplay nuance and specificity in their discussion of black workers' plight. Pelto argued in the same article that "class difference is truly the only difference between white and black workers." He held that the organization of black workers into the IWW alone would fix the race problem.[795]

This ambiguity also characterized the Wobblies' approach to the Jokinen case. The editor of *Industrialisti* made the following remark: "With its Negro question, the 'communist' movement seems to have totally forgotten that [the Negro race] is divided by class boundaries, just like every other race is; that there are the oppressors and the oppressed." Reminiscing about a time when he himself was working for a black employer, the Wobbly editor dismissed the notion that black people were somehow not influenced by the universal regularities of class relations between workers and capitalists: "The command [of the Negro employer] was pretty much similar to that of a white-skinned employer

794 Väinö Pelto: "Tummaihoisten siirtyminen pohjoiseen." *Industrialisti*, 18.3.1924.

795 Väinö Pelto: "Tummaihoisten siirtyminen pohjoiseen." *Industrialisti*, 18.3.1924. See also C. 4-57.: "Rotuvihan turmiollisuus luokkataistelussa." *Industrialisti*, 30.4.1924; Vera Smith: "Tummaihoiset – alistettu rotu." *Industrialisti*, 9.4.1924; "Värillisten työläisten järjestäminen." *Industrialisti*, 23.7.1924.

[…]. The same applies to Chinese employers or to employers of any other race. Class position always comes to the fore, no matter what the color of one's skin." It was only by finding "the material basis of equality between white-skinned and black-skinned workers" – not by enforcing equality to social relations from above, as the Communist Party had supposedly done – that true equality, the editor argued, could be achieved.[796] While the Wobbly critique concentrated on economic class, they also decried the communists' preoccupation with social equality.

The non-communist criticism of the Jokinen case was thus heavily gendered. It was fueled by the general indignation of male Finnish immigrants regarding the exogenous relationships of their female compatriots. This uneasiness was intensified by the lowly position of black Americans in racial hierarchies. Many felt that the behavior of Finnish-American women risked downgrading all Finns in the racial hierarchy. But the gendered rhetoric also served as a weapon in the heated political debate against the communists. By depicting communist Finns as submissive to the party's Jewish leadership and its black membership, the non-communists – especially conservatives and socialists – were effectively accusing the communists of unmanliness. Indeed, conservative and socialist newspapers often appealed to "ordinary" Finnish communists to reclaim their Finnish manhood by denouncing the emasculated policies of the communists. One conservative columnist mused: "I have heard that many men are clutching their fists in anger at the Jokinen hall. And it has even happened that someone has shouted: 'God damn it, a Negro is not going to dance with my missus!" The columnist added that this was the talk of a true man and a Finn and perhaps there was, after all, "a tribal brother" (*heimoveli*) under even the thickest of communist skins.[797]

796 "Rotukysymys ja 'kommunismi'," *Industrialisti*, 11.3.1931. See also A.L.: "Se neekerikysymys." *Industrialisti*, 26.2.1931.

797 Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 12.3.1931.

Thus, by framing the communists' purported laxity on social equality as unmanly and an un-Finnish form of submissiveness, the conservatives and socialists sought to draw communist support away from their New York stronghold in Harlem. The comments were also connected to a demographic shift that was already on-going in the 1930s: a Finnish exodus from Harlem to Brooklyn and other, whiter neighborhoods and suburbs. *Raivaaja* explicitly stated that Finns should leave Harlem, which was becoming too black, and where the threat of black violence against Finns was becoming ever more apparent – as the Jokinen case had purportedly shown.[798]

While the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset* was most vocal and vile in its criticism of communist racial politics, the communists themselves directed their ire against the socialists and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the IWW. This was reflective of the Communist Party's Third Period policy, which targeted non-communist leftists – "social fascists" – as being the revolutionary working class's most vicious enemy.[799] Communist newspapers published many refutations of the racial politics espoused in *Raivaaja* and *Industrialisti*.[800] Moreover, they singled out Finnish socialists in Harlem for especially harsh criticism. They accused the Finnish

798 "Rotukysymys ja suomalaiset." *Raivaaja* 8.3.1931. On the Finnish move away from Harlem, see Tommola 1988, p. 119.

799 On the Third Period, see, for example, Ottanelli 1991, pp. 9–48.

800 "New Yorkin noskela rotuvihan lietsontakeskus." *Eteenpäin*, 28.1.1931; "Neekereillekin." *Eteenpäin*, 8.2.1931; "Raivaajalla ja New Yorkin Uutisilla on sama kanta 'Harlemin neekerikysymyksessä.'" *Eteenpäin*, 14.2.1931; "Typerää kansallisintoilua." *Eteenpäin*, 10.3.1931; "Mongoolialaismoukkien suuruudenhulluus." *Eteenpäin*, 13.3.1931; "Vetoaa noskelaisiin." *Eteenpäin*, 14.3.1931; "Raivaaja rotuvihan kiihoittajana." *Eteenpäin,* 14.3.1931; "'Sosialisti'-puolueen 'rotutasa-arvoisuus.'" *Eteenpäin*, 19.3.1931; "Patriotismi, rotukysymys ja 'Industrialisti.'" *Eteenpäin*, 20.3.1931; "'Kun huuhkajat ulvovat.'" *Eteenpäin*, 25.3.1931; "Raivaaja provosoi hyökkäyksiä kommunisteja ja neekerityöläisiä vastaan Harlemissa." *Eteenpäin*, 27.3.1931; "Raivaaja jatkaa rotuvihan lietsomista neekereitä vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 1.4.1931; "Raivaaja pastoreineen neekerikysymystä penkomassa." *Eteenpäin*, 12.4.1931; "Raivaaja ja rotujen yhteenkuuluvaisuus." *Eteenpäin*, 7.6.1931.

socialist hall on Fifth Avenue of being the "center of white chauvinist instigation in Harlem,"[801] since it refused entry to black visitors, and organized protests in front of it. In March and April 1931, in particular, communist Finns and their black comrades organized protest meetings in front of the socialist hall, where they delivered fiery speeches against the white chauvinism of "social fascists."[802] The socialist *Raivaaja* accused the communists of putting the socialist hall under a "black siege" and for attempting to instigate a "race war."[803] When the socialist hall hosted events for Norman Thomas's presidential campaign in the fall of 1931, which also featured black socialist speakers, the communists again mobilized to showcase the Finnish socialists' hypocrisy on the race question. In November 1931, a Finnish communist tried to enter the socialist hall to play pool with a black comrade, but they were thrown out. The communist press blamed Jim Crow, while socialists accused the Finn of being drunk.[804] The only substance he had been drunk on was his hatred of class traitors, the communist Finn in question contended in his angry rebuttal of the socialist insinuations.[805]

When the Finnish Social Democrat Member of Parliament Miina Sillanpää visited New York in 1931, communist Finns or-

801 "New Yorkin noskela rotuvihan lietsontakeskus," *Eteenpäin*, 28.1.1931.

802 "Valmistavatko kommunistit väkivaltaista hyökkäystä New Yorkin työväentaloa vastaan", *Raivaaja,* 24.3.1931; "Onnistuneita puhetilaisuuksia Harlemissa", *Eteenpäin*, 26.3.1931."Noskelan nurkalla alkaa olla liikettä luokkataistelun merkeissä." *Eteenpäin*, 26.3.1931; "New Rochelle, N.Y.," *Eteenpäin*, 26.3.1931; "Raivaaja provosoi hyökkäyksiä kommunisteja ja neekerityöläisiä vastaan New Yorkissa." *Eteenpäin*, 27.3.1931; "N.Y. noskelan nurkalla tänä iltana katukokous. Useita suomalaisiakin puhujia." *Eteenpäin*, 30.4.1931.

803 "Valmistavatko kommunistit väkivaltaista hyökkäystä New Yorkin työväentaloa vastaan", *Raivaaja,* 24.3.1931

804 "Rotusorto N.Y. noskelassa." *Eteenpäin*, 5.11.1931; Iskuri: "Pelataan whistiä, vainotaan neekereitä, mutta päälle sitten rukoillaan ja kitarakuoro laulaa." *Eteenpäin*, 6.11.1931; "New Yorkin noskelaiset karkoittavat neekereitä haaliltaan." *Työmies*, 10.11.1931.

805 A. Ulvi: "Raivaajan New Yorkin toimittajan valheiden johdosta." *Eteenpäin*, 24.11.1931.

ganized protests against her in front of Harlem's Finnish socialist hall. Sillanpää later described her surprise that "even a Negro communist spoke against [my] coming to America."[806] When Sillanpää later wrote about her trip to America and bemoaned the Communist Party's reliance on the support of "backward" black Americans, the communist press emphasized these comments as yet another illustration of the concessions of "social fascists" to fascism.[807] Thus, communist Finns harnessed the race question as part of their broader campaign against "social fascists." The struggle became most intense in Harlem. However, their attempt to find allies among Harlem's black population was only partially successful. Perhaps the contention that a workers' hall belonging to an obscure European immigrant community was Harlem's chief center of "white chauvinist instigation" did not ring true to many black Harlemites?

The communists also used the race question to expose the hypocritical and anti-working-class positions of their rivals in the co-operative movement. Since 1929, the communists had waged a bitter battle against the non-communist leadership of the Central Co-Operative Exchange, led by the former communist Yrjö Halonen. In 1931, the race question was used by the communists to expose the "bourgeois" and "fascist" tendencies of their rivals. At the much-contested Brooklyn co-operative bakery, the non-communist shareholders argued at this time that communist control of the board would mean that even black people could become members. Consequently, communists used this rationale to denounce the "fascism" of their purportedly socialist rivals.[808]

On Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the Scottsboro case gave fodder to the communists in their on-going struggle against the

806 Miina Sillanpää: "Terveisiä Amerikasta." *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*. See also Iskuri: "Ministeri-Miina." *Eteenpäin*, 12.5.1931.

807 Miina Sillanpää: "Havaintoja Amerikan matkalta." *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, 8.8.1931; "Miina Sillanpään 'havaintoja' Amerikan suomalaisista." *Työmies*, 26.8.1931.

808 "Neekereillekin." *Eteenpäin*, 8.2.1931; "Päätöslauselma Brooklynin osuusleipomon johdon menettelytavoista." *Eteenpäin*, 2.9.1931.

non-communist co-operative movement. At a July meeting of the shareholders of Bruce Crossing's co-operative dairy, the communists demanded that the dairy issue a protest resolution on the Scottsboro case. When the leadership refused, noting that such issues were best left to the communist youth organization, *Työmies* compared the dairy bosses to the Ku Klux Klan and noted how the case had once and for all proven the anti-working-class position of the "Halonenites."[809] The communist Finns also used the Scottsboro case in their continuing political assault on their Finnish left-wing rivals. The communist press made much of the fact that *Raivaaja* had failed to offer unconditional support to the defense of the Scottsboro Boys and had expressed doubt about the nine men's innocence.[810] In its own newspaper, the non-communist co-operative movement urged its members to support the cause for "southern Negroes," but warned against supporting efforts that only served the communists, like fundraising drives for communist newspapers.[811]

The communist press's response to accusations that they were promoting interracial intimacy was ambiguous. On the one hand, communist writers criticized the racist implications of their rivals' insinuations and challenged the idea of a racially pure Finnishness. In a column on the subject, *Eteenpäin*'s editor-in-chief, Richard Pesola (using the pen name "Iskuri"), ridiculed the abhorrence of conservative and socialist Finns regarding sexual relations between Finns and blacks by referring to the racially ambiguous background of Finns themselves. Pesola reminded his readers that Finns originated from the non-white, Mongolian race, and that the Finnish nation was the result of centuries of race mixing on the Eurasian Steppe. Even upon their arrival in America, Pesola recounted, Finns had displayed no prejudice against mixing with other races. He continued that it was only

809 "Osuustoimintaparoonit ja Scottsboron juttu." *Työmies*, 2.7.1931; "Haloslaisten ja klanien yhteisrintama Bruce Crossingissa edelleen ehjänä." *Työmies*, 16.7.1931.

810 "Nosket ja Scottsboron juttu." *Työmies*, 17.6.1931;

811 "Kolmas aikakausi linjaleirissä." *Osuustoimintalehti*, 8.7.1931.

when they had adopted American mores on racial chauvinism and the anti-Russian tenets of the Finnish bourgeoisie that Finns had grown wary of mixing with other races and nationalities.[812]

Other articles also referenced the Mongolian racial background of Finns as a means of countering the conservative claim that mixing with blacks was somehow tarnishing the purity of Finnishness. Ridiculing how conservative compatriots were reluctant to bathe with black men, an *Eteenpäin* columnist noted how the communists were "not afraid to enter a sauna where a clean Negro worker has bathed, but we do avoid like the plague any sauna that we know has been frequented by syphilis-ridden Mongolian Finnish louts or 'co-operative lords.'"[813] Castigating "the few Finnish workers" who had yielded to "agitation on the black question" by conservatives and socialists, another communist writer noted that the agitators had forgotten that "Finns themselves are of Mongolian origin." The writer associated these agitators with a lower level of intellectual development: "No Negro could ever come up with [these kinds of ideas], it takes a true Finn to utter such things publicly. One is left to wonder whether these people occupy a lower level of development than the blacks that they so detest." [814] Whereas the non-communist press had depicted the Finns' abhorrence of interracial socializing as a natural impulse against miscegenation, the communist press explained such animosity as an ideologically produced state of affairs. They also contested the notion that there was any real kind of racial purity to defend: as Mongols, Finns were already beyond redemption from a eugenic point of view.

On the other hand, it was clear that the male communist writers themselves were not completely at ease with the prospect of interracial socializing, especially between the sexes. Communist writers sought to reassure their readers, especially women, that

812 [Richard Pesola]: "Kummia kuuluu," *Eteenpäin*, 13.6.1931.

813 "Mongoolialaismoukkien suuruudenhulluus." *Eteenpäin*, 13.3.1931. See also "Naimauutinen hoi – mongolimainetta on häväisty." *Eteenpäin*, 26.4.1931.

814 "'Kun huuhkajat ulvovat'," *Eteenpäin*, 25.3.1931.

the purpose of their racial politics was not to bring black men into intimate contact with Finnish women, but to ease political work between comrades of different races. A communist activist explained the implications of their race policy in the following manner: "The issue is not that we, or, for that matter, our Negro comrades, have to get into close contact by 'jazzing' in dance halls. This is not even possible because our halls play dance music from the Old Country." Rather, the race question should be depicted as a class issue that required close political cooperation between the races, but stopped short of any further intimacy.[815] A columnist for the socialist *Raivaaja* claimed that the communist hall had stopped playing jazz and was now playing traditional Finnish dance music with accordions only after black men started to frequent the hall. The socialist contended that the communists hoped that traditional Finnish music would scare away the black men. Moreover, he wondered sardonically if the accordion should thus be labeled a tool of "white chauvinism."[816]

The Finnish-American communist press constantly accused conservatives and socialists of reducing the race question to sexual matters and attributed this reductionism to the debauchery of its ideological rivals. Communist journalists constantly referred to the unsavory lust of conservative and socialist men for black women. Pesola argued that "It is common knowledge that the Finnish men most worried about the relationships between workers of different races, of which the communists are in favor, hunt Negro women themselves in dark alleys to satisfy their sexual urges." It was only when the prospect of Finnish women dancing with black men had arisen that these Finnish men had "transformed themselves into great Finnish saints who have al-

815 "Neekerikysymyksen eteen työskennelty," *Eteenpäin*, 30.9.1931. On assertions that communist agitation on the race question was not aimed at socializing, but was directed at the political and economic class struggle, see also Kerhon jäsen: "Neekerityöläisten järjestäminen." *Työmies*, 29.12.1931.

816 "Hanuri ja valkoshovinismi." *Raivaaja*, 3.4.1931.

ways wanted to live and socialize only with other Finns."[817] In one article, *Eteenpäin* outed a specific conservative columnist for sexually abusing black women: "Tahvo [the columnist] is not afraid of a Negro woman when no one is looking. Even though he has a wife, he has visited some suspicious places in Negro neighborhoods and once I even had to free a Negro woman from his drunken embrace in a dark staircase."[818] Thus, the communist press argued that it was conservative and socialist men who were *actually* engaging in interracial sex.

This squeamishness regarding allegations that they were promoting interracial affairs illustrates how the communists, despite their militant anti-racism, reproduced some of the basic discursive premises of contemporary racial wisdom in the U.S. In their analysis of Scottsboro campaign of the CPUSA in the early 1930s, Miller et al. have noted that while the Communist Party "defied existing parameters of racial etiquette," at the same time it "paradoxically drew on and reified racial imagery drawn from the endemic features of predominantly white political cultures," posing "a fundamental dilemma for the project of racial social transformation."[819] This was also true of Finnish-American communists and their discourse on race during the early 1930s.

Yet, while the communists shared some key premises about gender and race with their conservative and socialist detractors, they also drew on a somewhat different understanding of masculinity. For them, it was submission to capitalist ideologies – like white chauvinism – that constituted the greatest form of unmanliness. Communists did not see white chauvinism as a mere question of individual tolerance, but depicted it as a bourgeois weapon in its war against the working class. This weapon was devised to keep the potentially dangerous working class fragmented

817 [Richard Pesola]: "Kummia kuuluu," *Eteenpäin*, 13.6.1931. See also H. H-n: "Patriotismi, rotukysymys ja 'Industrialisti'", *Eteenpäin* 20.3.1931.

818 "Tahvokin on nähty rotukysymystä ratkaisemassa," *Eteenpäin*, 28.4.1931.

819 James A. Miller, Susan D. Pennybacker & Eve Rosenhaft: "Mother Ada Wright and the International Campaign to Free the Scottsboro Boys, 1931-1934." *American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, 2001, p. 392.

and disunited. Thus, a white chauvinist was not only an intolerant person; he was a traitor to the workers' cause, "a phonograph for the capitalists," as Hathaway had put it at the Jokinen trial.[820]

This contention was not necessarily novel; the socialist and Wobbly press had for a long time argued that racial hatred served to benefit bosses. But the communist critique added a new sense of urgency and militancy. Writing for the theoretical journal *Viesti* in October 1930, Richard Pesola argued that the isolation in America of "workers into many different, mutually hostile sections" was not merely a reflection of dominant class relations, but a practice actively perpetrated by the capitalist class, making its "cruel exploitation of workers" possible and successful in the first place.[821] The official resolution on "the Negro question" by the Finnish Bureau of the Communist Party stated the matter in the following terms:

> The bourgeoisie tries to break the ranks of the working people by all means at its disposal; by creating hatred and feuds between different nationalities, races, and linguistic groups; by misleading people into believing that one race, or one nationality, is better than another; and by inciting these groups to hate one another. We know that this kind of stirring of hatred is upheld solely for the reason that attention would get distracted from real class struggle and so that the common enemy of oppressed nationalities and all working people—capitalism and its system of oppression—would remain blurry.[822]

Thus, when chauvinism was conceptualized as an instrument consciously devised and employed by the bourgeoisie in order to exploit the working class, workers who upheld racial prejudices were left in an awkward position. They were not merely holding

820 CPUSA 1931, p. 24.

821 Pesola 1930, p. 310.

822 SKT: "Yhd. Kommunistisen Puolueen suomalaisen toimiston ja N.Y:n piirin kieliosaston päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksessä," *Eteenpäin* ja *Työmies* 21.12.1930; *Toveri*, 22.12.1930.

morally unsound and scientifically superfluous ideas – grave errors in their own right – but were also guilty of something much more sinister: of working toward the interests of the ruling class and therefore being actively in cahoots with the class enemy. By framing white chauvinism as a bourgeois influence within the working class, the Communist Party made adherence to racial prejudices seem tantamount to treason for the working-class cause and made the struggle against such prejudices seem more legitimate for many in the communist movement.[823]

When the Finns in the IWW criticized communists on grounds of insufficient economism, the latter replied by noting that revolution in the economic realm would remain a pipe-dream if inequality in the social realm remained unaddressed. Thus, a true working-class position required tireless work in order to achieve racial equality *before* the revolution, not just after it. Racial hatred was hence a thoroughly counter-revolutionary stance and any working man worth his salt should work against it.[824] The editors of *Eteenpäin* declared: "White chauvinism is treason to the class cause of the working class and [means] siding with the bourgeoisie in the class struggle."[825] After his trial, August Jokinen emerged as a communist hero who had rejected his previous submissiveness and had embraced the true working-class position on the race question. A communist commentary lauded his manly behavior, illustrating how communist discourse on white chauvinism associated anti-chauvinism with masculinity.[826]

While the linking of anti-chauvinism with masculine militancy undoubtedly made the struggle for black rights appear more appealing for many male Finnish communists, it also construed new kinds of boundaries. In effect, it argued for racial inclusivity

823 Solomon 1998, 129–131.

824 H. H- - n: "Patriotismi, rotukysymys ja 'Industrialisti.'" *Eteenpäin*, 20.3. 1931; *Työmies*, 3.4.1931. See also K. Hokkinen: "Industrialisti selittää patriotismia ja shovinismia." *Työmies*, 1.4.1931; "Valkoshovinismi ja I.W.W." *Työmies*, 28.11.1931.

825 "Suhteemme neekerityöläisiin," *Eteenpäin*, 30.10.1931.

826 "Tov. Jokisen juttu selventää taistelun vaatimuksia." *Eteenpäin*, 11.3.1931.

by drawing on gendered exclusivity – anti-chauvinism constituted a sphere of male working-class bonding. In his study of Italian-American anarchists during the 1912 textile workers' strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Michael Miller Topp has illustrated how the radical anarchists of the Federazione Socialista Italiana (FSI) countered nativist rhetoric of inferior foreigners by displaying masculinist braggadocio that emphasized their fearlessness, courage and readiness for violence. This gendered rhetoric of anti-racism was a "double-edged sword." While perhaps challenging assumptions of lethargic, weak and unmanly foreigners, this machoism worked to effectively blind Italian male anarchists to the decisive role of women in the textile workers' strike. Topp notes that the male anarchists' threats of violence against mill owners and police, and their more general assertions of masculinity, "constituted a profound challenge to their proscribed place in the racial hierarchy, but also rendered them unable to recognize the distinctive contribution women workers were making at Lawrence and in the American labor movement in general."[827]

The masculine anti-chauvinism of Finnish communists resulted in a similar blindness to women's role in the race question. At most, the communist men addressed Finnish women and "Finnish maid girls" in a patronizing manner, asking them to understand the "class nature" of the race question and to not be seduced by anti-communist rhetoric about predatory black men.[828] However, women were far from passive bystanders in this debate. The women's associations of the FWF branches debated the race question actively in the spring of 1931. Indeed, many resolutions on the race question that were published in *Eteenpäin*, *Työmies* and *Työläisnainen* in the spring of 1931 were by wom-

827 Michael Miller Topp: "'It Is Providential That There Are Foreigners Here': Whiteness and Masculinity in the Making of Italian American Syndicalist Identity." In Jennifer Guglielmo & Salvatore Salerno (ed.): *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America.* Routledge: London 2003, pp. 106–109.

828 "Suomalaiset työläisnaiset ja neekerikysymys." *Eteenpäin*, 14.3.1931; N.Y. Kerho: "Palvelustytöt ja neekerikysymys." *Eteenpäin*, 13.10.1931.

en's associations.[829] The race question was also actively covered by the women's weekly, *Työläisnainen*, which did not ignore the male chauvinist ethos of the communist press's discussions on race. In a December 1930 article, *Työläisnainen* noted that many "backward men" still thought that the race question, like other serious political issues, were only male concerns. This patronizing male attitude was based on the same "ancient prejudices" as racial chauvinism: "Men have been taught from early on that 'women are only women' (*'akkaväki on akkaväkeä'*), and that they should only occupy themselves with certain 'women's issues'" like cooking, housekeeping and child rearing.[830] Male dismissiveness of women's opinions on race was thus a reflection of the very same problem – backward prejudices – that the men thought they were addressing with their high-minded rhetoric on racial chauvinism.

The connection between white and male chauvinism by the *Työläisnainen* writer was reflective of a growing understanding within the communist women's movement in the U.S. about the connectedness of different forms of oppression. The discussion on white chauvinism in the 1930s encouraged communist women to connect racial oppression to other kinds of chauvinism, especially male chauvinism.[831] These links were also made among Finnish communist women. In a November 1930 editorial, *Työläisnainen*

829 "Massan alueen naissihteeristön lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 6.1.1931; "New Yorkin alueen laajennetun naissihteeristön päätöslauselma neekerikysymyksestä," *Eteenpäin*, 23.1.1931; *Työläisnainen*; *Työmies*; "Maynardin naisjaoston päätöslauselma kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 25.1.1931; "Fitchburgin naisjaoston lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Työläisnainen*, 11.2.1931; "Bostonin naisjaoston lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 5.3.1931; "Päätöslause rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1931; "Taistelu valkoshovinismia vastaan." *Työläisnainen*, 25.3.1931; "Keskustelukokouksilla mitataan yhdistysjäsenistön tietoisuutta." *Eteenpäin*, 26.5.1931. The women's associations were also active in organizing protests on the Scottsboro case, see "Rudyardin naisjaoston protesti neekerinuorukaisten teloitusta vastaan." *Työmies*, 2.6.1931.

830 "'Kaikista eniten sorretut.' *Työläisnainen*, 31.12.1930.

831 Kate Weigand: *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation.* Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore 2000.

connected the anti-foreigner, anti-black and anti-woman policies of capitalism. Capitalists used different kinds of division to divide workers and keep them bickering; that women were paid less than men, and that black workers were paid less than white workers were part of the same politics of division.[832] These women were not above the cultural assumptions about gender roles; they often insisted that they should have a say in the race question as mothers. Since women were the ones bringing up the next generation of class warriors, they were at the forefront of educational work that sought to root out white chauvinism from future workers.[833] Indeed, the women's newspaper *Toveritar* and its special issues for children had long published stories that taught children about the ills of racial prejudice and chauvinism. These stories could feature, for example, a bullied black child, who is defended by a white socialist child or a parent, who teaches a lesson about the injustice of racial hatred.[834] The women's paper also published translated accounts by black writers about their lives, thereby illustrating the unique forms of oppression meted out against black women.[835]

Indeed, the analysis on race in *Työläisnainen* articles was often very attentive to the complexity of exploitative structures. A case in point was the commentary on Finnish men's sexual relations with Harlem's black women. Whereas the male communists referenced these relations in a gleeful tone to shame their conservative, Wobbly and Socialist rivals, the women's critique connected the sexual relations of Finnish men with black women to the racialized power relations inherent in prostitution. They pointed out the hypocrisy of *Raivaaja*'s male journalists, who were unwilling

832 "Jakamalla hallitseminen." *Työläisnainen*, 5.11.1930.

833 "'Kaikista eniten sorretut.'" *Työläisnainen*, 31.12.1930; "Maynardin naisjaoston lausunto kansallisuuskysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 25.1.1931.

834 See, for example, "Anna Tilda." *Toveritar*, 26.3.1918; "Musta Sally ja kintaat." *Toveritar*, 7.1.1919; Tyyne Lamminen: "Neekeripoika." *Toveritar*, 27.7.1920.

835 "Neekerinaisen elämästä." *Työläisnainen*, 16.6.1931; "Neekerisotilaan kokemuksia sodan ajalta." *Työläisnainen*, 5.8.1931.

to fight for the rights of poor black people, but were still willing to exploit those "Negro daughters" who had been forced into brothels by poverty.[836] The women's newspaper explored the issue of race most thoroughly in an article of December 1930, which was headlined "Those Who Are the Most Oppressed." The article explained the concept of double oppression by showing how black people in American history had been, and still were, kept down by both the "capitalist exploitative system" and by "racial hatred that has been incited to its peak." It noted how capitalists fostered racial and national division in order to keep different groups at each other's throats. She noted that both Finnish immigrants and black Americans faced discrimination, which had been legitimated with similar arguments about physical appearance:

> We are despised because of our foreign-born descent, a descent that is in most cases revealed by our speech and our facial features – do we not like to joke that we have 'the map of Finland on our faces'? The Negroes are also despised because of their descent, and even if they have 'the map of Africa on their faces,' those differences in color or physical features should not stop us from realizing that we are members of the same working class.[837]

But while the article noted the similar legitimations of anti-immigrant and anti-black discrimination, it did not claim that the two groups were equally oppressed. There was a color discrimination in America that kept black people at the bottom rung of the ethnic hierarchy: "Even the children of the poorest white parents are taught from early on to show their contempt for the Negroes and to showcase their belonging to 'the better race.'" The writer did not try to distance Finns from her definition of "whites"; rather, she noted how Finnish immigrants had used whiteness in order to claim Americanness:

836 "Raivaajan herrain erikoisrakkaus." *Työläisnainen*, 1.4.1931.

837 "Kaikista eniten sorretut," *Työläisnainen*, 30.12.1930.

> And to be sure, this contempt for the Negroes was one of those things belonging to 'Americanness' that the Finnish migrant folk learned right after their arrival in this country. The immigrants felt at every turn that they were despised in this land, and probably because of this it was comforting to discover that there were people in this country for whom even the despised immigrants could show their contempt and claim themselves to be 'white persons' ['*valakoonen ihiminen*'] belonging to 'the better race.'"[838]

The *Työläisnainen* editors' depiction of the mechanisms of oppression was insightful in many ways. It marked a further imaginative departure in the social understanding of at least some Finnish American radicals, from the reducing of societal power relations to mere capitalistic exploitation of workers by capitalists. The one-dimensional understanding of oppression as a simple class relation that pitted generic workers against equally generic capitalists had often depicted Finnish migrant workers as mere victims of the oppressive system. Even when other dimensions were considered – most often the nativist discrimination of the foreign-born by the native-born – the picture of Finnish migrants' position in the societal power hierarchy was much the same: Finnish migrant workers were indisputably victims of, not beneficiaries from, the oppressive system of American capitalism. Introducing the category of color into the calculation, as did the editors of *Työläisnainen*, made the picture more complicated. The editors of *Työläisnainen* argued that Finnish migrants, despite being exploited as workers themselves and despised as foreign-born, had used "their" whiteness as a means to separate themselves from a group of people who were even more despised and oppressed in American society. Thus, they contributed to the "double oppression" of blacks in America.

838 "Kaikista eniten sorretut," *Työläisnainen*, 30.12.1930.

4.6. The Fight Continues: Finnish Communists and Race after the Jokinen Trial

While the communist press did its utmost to toe the party line, the treatment of Jokinen, which led to his eventual deportation, did not sit well with many communist Finns in Harlem. Many felt that Jokinen was unfairly "scapegoated" and that the Communist Party's rash public trial had helped the federal authorities to track communist Finns with the goal of deporting them.[839] These sentiments were widely commented on in socialist and conservative newspapers,[840] but the communists did not express them in public – although many articles did decry the susceptibility of some members to anti-communist propaganda on the race question. Still, the Finnish-language communist press remained faithful to the party line and lauded the party's staunch stand against the scourge of chauvinism. The publishing house of *Eteenpäin* published a Finnish translation of the court proceedings of the Jokinen case, and the press urged its readers to familiarize themselves with it.[841] The journalists of the Finnish-language communist press largely followed the *Daily Worker* in their editorial line,[842] which was also evident in their discussion of the Jokinen case and the race question in general.

That Jokinen himself repudiated his previous opinions, and that the Communist Party so vocally came to his support in his anti-deportation campaign, probably made it easier for him to toe the line. The communist press extensively covered the campaign

839 Naison 2005, p. 48.

840 Finntownin majuri: "Finntownin majuri kertoo." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 12.3.1931; "Muutamia tosiasioita suomalaisen kommunistisen järjestön sisäisistä asioista." *Raivaaja*, 23.9.1931.

841 *Rotuviha proletaarisen oikeuden edessä.* Eteenpain Press: New York [1931]; "Kiinnostava asiakirja rotukysymyksestä." *Eteenpäin*, 27.5.1931; *Työmies*, 29.5.1931; "Rotuviha proletaarisen oikeuden edessä." *Eteenpäin*, 28.5.1931; "Merkillinen asiakirja suomeksi." *Työmies*, 11.6.1931.

842 Interview with Ernest Koski. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

that was mounted to save "Comrade Jokinen" from deportation, and frequently connected the struggle for foreign-born workers with the struggle for black rights.[843] The communist press could present the struggle for immigrant and black rights as part of the same overall struggle against white capitalist America. That this position did not wholly reflect the official communist line – which held that white immigrants, like native-born white workers, held power over black workers – was quietly toned down. The Wisconsin-based *Työmies*, for example, connected the struggle for black rights to contemporary efforts by Michigan legislators to register foreigners.[844] This undoubtedly made the anti-chauvinist rhetoric more persuasive for Finnish communists and alleviated bitterness about the Jokinen case, but it also somewhat dulled the bite of the communist critique about Finnish complicity in maintaining white supremacy.[845]

After the Jokinen trial, the Finnish-language communist press intensively followed the many campaigns that the Communist Party mounted against racial hatred and in support of black civil

843 See, for example, "Toveri Jokisen karkoitusjuttu ja rotuvainot." *Työmies*, 11.7.1931; "Taistelu ulkosyntyisten työläisten vainoa vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 28.7.1931; "New Yorkin suomalaisten työläisten julkilausunto tov. August Jokisen karkotusta vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 28.7.1931; "Tov. Aug. Jokisen puolustuskokous." *Eteenpäin*, 28.8.1931; "LSNR tuomitsee Jokisen karkotuksen." *Eteenpäin*, 29.8.1931; "Tov. August Jokinen Ellis saarelle." *Eteenpäin*, 29.8.1931; "Int. Labor Defense on estänyt Jokisen karkotuksen." *Eteenpäin*, 3.9.1931; "Tov. A. Jokisen kuulustelu on tänään esillä." *Eteenpäin*, 16.9.1931; "Ulkosyntyisten suojelusliiton lausunto toveri Jokisen asiassa." *Eteenpäin*, 18.9.1931; "Mielenosoitus tiistaina tov. August Jokisen karkotusta vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 20.9.1931; "Protestikokous on tov. August Jokisen puolesta." *Eteenpäin*, 22.9.1931; T.N. Carlson: "Aug. Jokista tapaamassa Ellis-saarella." *Eteenpäin*, 3.10.1931; *Työmies*, 7.10.1931; "Protesteeraavat Jokisen karkotusta vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 9.10.1931;

844 "Rotu- ja kansallisvihan lietsojia vastaan!" *Työmies*, 13.6.1931; "Murskatkaa Michiganin registeröimislaki." *Työmies*, 19.6.1931.

845 See, for example, "Tov. August Jokinen joukkokuulusteltavaksi valkoshovinististen mielipiteidensä takia." *Eteenpäin*, 28.2.1931; "Tov. August Jokisen joukkokuulustelu herättää huomiota työläisten keskuudessa." *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1931; "Tov. Jokisen juttu." *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1931; "Rotu- ja kansallisvihan lietsojia vastaan!" *Työmies*, 13.6.1931.

and economic rights. The most widely covered campaign was the effort to save the so-called Scottsboro Boys from execution. In April 1931, nine young black men were arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama for allegedly raping two white women. The Communist Party mounted a large public campaign to save the men from the hands of Alabama's white justice system. The party organized a legal team to defend the accused in court, staged mass demonstrations on the streets of American cities and organized fundraising and letter-writing campaigns among its rank and file.[846] Finnish communists participated in this nation-wide campaign. Branches of the Finnish Workers' Federation and its women's chapters organized meetings around the country in order to collect money for the defense of the Scottsboro Boys and to write letters to Alabama's governor to protest the young men's "legal lynching" (*Image 5*).

The Finnish Labor Temple became an important venue for Scottsboro protest meetings in Harlem. On 16 May, after the first mass demonstration for the Scottsboro Boys in New York, the Labor Temple hosted a major protest meeting attended by hundreds of participants and representatives of different labor and black civil rights organizations. Among the speakers were Ada Wright, the mother of two of the accused, who became an active participant in the communist campaign, William L. Patterson and William Z. Foster.[847] For Finnish communists, the hosting of

846 Solomon 1998, pp. 185–206; James Goodman: *Stories of Scottsboro.* Vintage Books: New York 1994. The Communist Party's appeal to struggle for the Scottsboro Nine was quickly translated and published in Finnish communist papers. See "Estäkää yhdeksän neekerinuorukaisen 'laillinen' lynchaaminen Alabamassa!" *Eteenpäin*, 17.4.1931; "Organisatooriset ohjeet Scottsboron jutussa." *Työmies*, 22.5.1931; *Eteenpäin*, 27.5.1931; "Puolustakaa neekereitä Alabaman verilöylyltä!" *Työmies*, 26.7.1931.

847 "200 eri työväenjärjestöä edustettuna Scottsboron yhteisrintamakonferenssissa." *Eteenpäin*, 20.5.1931; "Tärkeä poliittinen oikeusjuttu." *Eteenpäin*, 20.5.1931; *Työmies*, 26.5.1931; Iskuri: "Scottsboron juttu." *Eteenpäin*, 21.5.1931. Mrs. Wright had visited the Labor Temple already before the mass meeting to help in fundraising, see "Scottsboron neekerinuorukaisten puolustaminen." *Eteenpäin*, 15.5.1931. For Finnish participation in other Scottsboro events in Harlem, see, for example, "Työläiset Työn

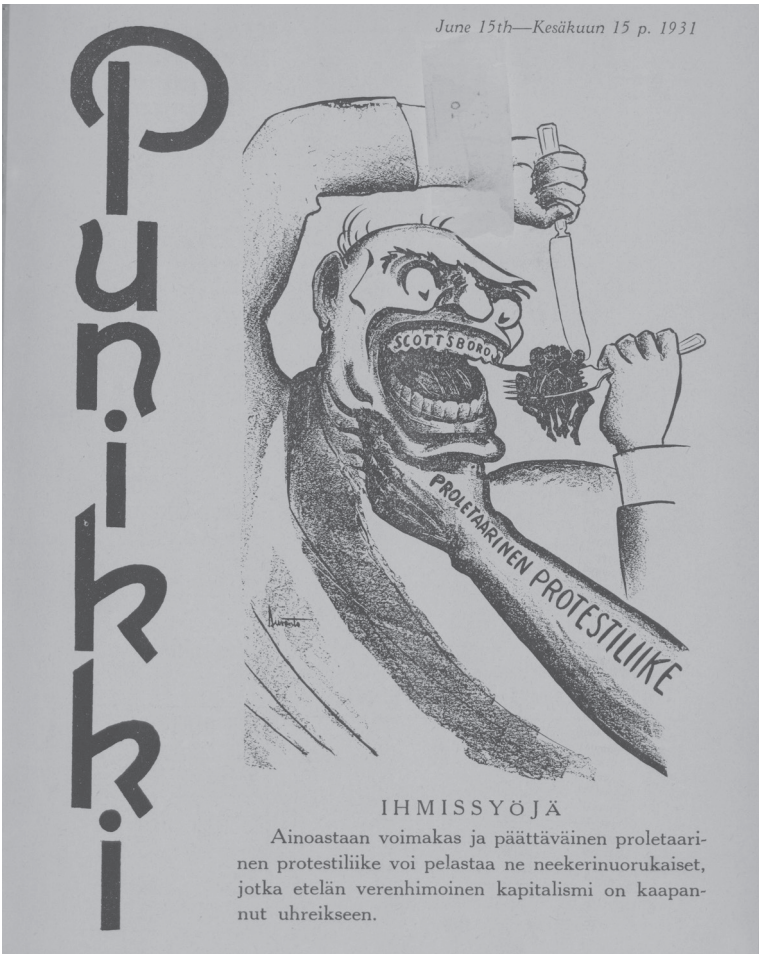

Image 5: The cover of the communist humor magazine Punikki from 1931. The cover depicts a white capitalist who is trying to eat the Scottsboro Boys, reversing the civilizational hierarchy between the purportedly civilized white Americans and the savage black southerners. The hand grabbing the man's throat is that of the "proletarian protest movement." The caption reads: "A Cannibal. Only a strong and determined proletarian protest movement can save those young Negroes who have become the victims of South's blood-thirsty capitalism." Source: Punikki, 15.6.1931. (Screenshot image from the digitized newspaper collections of the National Library of Finland.)

this meeting served as a way to repair the damage that had been done to their reputation during the Jokinen case. Indeed, the interracial meeting was lauded in *Eteenpäin* as "the greatest event ever organized at the Labor Temple."[848] Elsewhere in the country, the Scottsboro case was also seen as a way to improve the image of Finns in the communist movement. A Finnish communist organizer in Hancock, Michigan declared: "Now we can finally show that we are international class strugglers," when calling for his fellow Finns to attend a meeting in defense of the Alabama nine. He went on to encourage his comrades to be present at the demonstration: "We must by our attendance now prove that we are free from white chauvinism."[849]

Protest meetings about the Scottsboro case were organized by the Finnish Workers' Federation throughout the country. The meetings collected funds for the defense of the nine "Negro workers," sent appeals to Alabama's governor and issued protest resolutions, some of which were published in *Työmies* and *Eteenpäin*.[850] When Richard B. Moore, the prominent black commu-

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Temppelille perjantaina." *Eteenpäin*, 5.6.1931; "Protesteeraamaan!" *Eteenpäin*, 26.6.1931; For similar events elsewhere in the country, see, for example, "Yhteisrintamakonferenssi Scottsborossa vainottujen puolustamiseksi Duluthissa." *Työmies*, 30.5.1931; "Gary, Ind." *Työmies*, 30.5.1931; "Scottsboron konferenssi Chicagossa." *Työmies*, 2.6.1931; "Scottsboro konferenssi St. Paulissa." *Työmies*, 3.6.1931; "Joukolla tukemaan Scottsboron taistelua." *Työmies*, 4.6.1931; Kerho: "Scottsboron tuomittujen puolustuskonferenssi Baltimoressa, Md." *Eteenpäin*, 13.6.1931; "Kaksi onnistunutta Scottsboro yhteisrintamakonferenssia." *Työmies*, 23.6.1931.

848 Iskuri [Richard Pesola]: "Scottsboron juttu." *Eteenpäin*, 21.5.1931.

849 Kolmen työväenjärjestön valitsema komitea: "Hancock, Michigan. Kolmen työväenjärjestön protestikokous", *Työmies*, 21.5.1931. See also W.A. Harju: "Osuustoimintaväki puolustamaan Scottsboron uhreija." *Eteenpäin*, 27.5.1931; "Farmarit puolustamaan Scottsboron neekerinuorukaisia." *Työmies*, 28.5.1931; "Raportti Chicagon S.T.Y. kokouksesta." *Työmies*, 10.6.1931.

850 "Rudyardin naisjaoston protesti neekerinuorukaisten teloitusta vastaan." *Työmies*, 2.6.1931; "Protesti." *Työmies* 7.6.1931; "Protesti Scottsboron uhrien tuomioita vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 12.6.1931; Brooklynin kerho: "Scottsboron nuorukaiset." *Eteenpäin*, 18.6.1931; "Oulu, Wis." *Työmies*, 17.7.1931; "Illinoisin aluejuhlilla hyväksyttyjä päätöslauselmia." *Työmies*, 18.7.1931;

nist leader, who had been Jokinen's "defense attorney" at his trial, toured the country in the summer of 1931 to speak about the Scottsboro case, Finnish workers' associations urged their members to go see this "favorite speaker of the Finns."[851] The two communist daily newspapers also followed the case intently and frequently commented on it in their editorials.[852] The race question also continued to be discussed at educational events organized by FWF branches, and reports of these discussions were frequently published in *Eteenpäin* and *Työmies*.[853]

In addition to the Scottsboro case, the Communist Party also mounted many other political campaigns that involved the foregrounding of the so-called Negro question. In the 1932 presidential election, the party became the first U.S. political party to field a white-black ticket when it nominated William Z. Foster and James Ford as its candidates. Ford received wide coverage in the Finnish-language communist press. When the black party organizer Angelo Herndon was arrested in Atlanta in July 1932, his

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Jeffer: "Ore.-Wash. alueen vuotuiset keskikesän juhlat." *Työmies*, 23.7.1931; "Astoria, Ore." *Työmies*, 26.7.1931; "Rock, Mich." *Työmies*, 13.8.1931.

851 "Richard Mooren puhujamatka." *Työmies*, 3.6.1931; "Tov. Richard B. Moore puhuu maanantaina." *Työmies*, 25.7.1931. Moore's speeches were widely lauded by participants, see "Los Angeles, Cal." *Työmies*, 19.7.1931; "Tov. Mooren puhetilaisuus onnistui suuremmoisesti." *Työmies*, 29.7.1931.

852 For editorials on the Scottsboro case, see, for example, "Scottsboron 'oikeus'-murhat estettävä." *Eteenpäin*, 17.4.1931; "Ainoastaan yhteisrintama voi pelastaa Scottsborossa tuomitut yhdeksän nuorukaista." *Eteenpäin*, 10.5.1931; "Nosket ja Scottsboron juttu." *Työmies*, 17.6.1931; "Taantumuksellinen neekeriliitto rotusorron välikappaneena." *Työmies*, 17.6.1931; "Scottsboron juttu saa kansainvälistä huomiota." *Työmies*, 21.6.1931.

853 See, for example, Kerho: "Kansallinen kysymys Keenessä." *Eteenpäin*, 18.10.1931; Kerho: "Neekerityöläisten terrorisoiminen." *Eteenpäin*, 20.10.1931; I.S.T.Y.: "Ilmaisu rotuvihan juurtuneisuudesta." Eteenpäin, 1.11.1931; Glassportin Y.K.V. Kerho: "Kansallinen ja rotu-sorto kapitalismin vallitessa." *Eteenpäin*, 3.11.1931; Fire Steelin kerho: "Rotuviha." *Työmies*, 19.11.1931; Kerho: "Työttömyys ja kansallisuusviha." *Työmies*, 21.11.1931; Kerhon jäsen: "Neekerityöläisten järjestäminen." *Työmies*, 29.12.1931; Quincy K. Kerho: "Rotuviha ja sen poistaminen." *Eteenpäin*, 1.4.1933; Daisytownin kerho: "Taisteluun valkoshovinismia vastaan!" *Eteenpäin*, 30.4.1933.

case also became a communist *cause célèbre* in the Finnish-language communist press. The Scottsboro case continued to be covered throughout the 1930s. In 1935, the *Työmies* publishing house printed a Finnish translation of Harry Haywood's pamphlet on "Negro liberation."[854]

Much of this enthusiastic coverage of the "Negro question" can be undoubtedly explained with Party loyalty, but it is evident that many Finnish communists were also genuinely enthused about the issue. Mark Naison has noted that the party's militancy on race was emotionally moving for many of its Jewish and other immigrant members: "Finnish, Polish, Hungarian, Irish, Italian and Slavic Communists became passionate exponents of the Party's position on the Negro question."[855] Indeed, in his unpublished memoirs, Henry Puro (John Wiita) mentions the Scottsboro case as an especially moving experience during his activism in the 1930s. He was sent by the party to Harlem in order to organize on behalf of the International Defense League, where he not only worked with party activists, but also with black clergy: "The false accusation [against the Scottsboro Boys] turned against its inventors and started a large wave of awakening among the Negroes and it also caused awakening among whites against racial hatred and oppression."[856] Carl Ross (Kalle Rasi), an activist in Minnesota's Young Communists' League, remembers that the campaigns of the early 1930s did not lead to significant engagement with black workers in the Upper Midwest, but had an effect on white communist opinion. This prepared the ground for more efficient work on black rights during the Popular Front era. As Ross remembered: "the main impact of all this was to indoctrinate the CP-Left with an attitude making subsequent efforts to recruit blacks and to put them in leadership more effective, i.e., an im-

854 Harry Haywood: *Neekeriväestön vapautuksen tie*. Työmies Society: Superior, Wisconsin.

855 Naison 2005, p. 49.

856 John Wiita: *John Wiidan muistelmat.* Unpublished memoirs at the Department of European and World History, University of Turku, Appendix, pp. 2–3.

pact among whites."[857] Interracial social events became more frequent in at least some parts of the country. In Astoria, Filipinos from local canneries and Filipino bands were invited to attend and perform at the communist Finnish hall. A Finnish communist remembers that "they were always glad to come and help us and they certainly knew what our thoughts were and they were kind of ostracized by the rest of the people in Astoria."[858]

The intra-Finnish debate on the so-called Negro question tailed off in the summer of 1931, as *Raivaaja* toned down its rhetoric and published an editorial which called for the labor movement to pay more attention to the plight of black people. The communists interpreted this as a concession by the socialists. Still, the communist attacks on the white chauvinism of socialists and Wobblies continued throughout the early 1930s, albeit with less intensity.[859] When an *Industrialisti* editor, for example, wrote an article in October 1934, in which he criticized Harlem's Finnish communists for their emphasis on social equality with "illiterate" black people and seemed to suggest that Finns should move out of the increasingly black Harlem, an *Eteenpäin* columnist derided the piece as "white chauvinist lies." The columnist continued in a similar vein: "The writer considers it self-evident that the Negro people are something inferior, worse and more backward than 'we Finns' or whites in general." The suggestion that Finns should not socialize with black people or that they should move away from a neighborhood populated by black people was based on the

857 Letter from Carl Ross to Harvey Klehr, 19.7.1976. Carl Ross papers, Box 5, Folder 1, Miscellaneous, Political Research (Correspondence), Klehr-Ross correspondence. Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.

858 Interview with Ernest Koski by Paul Buhle. 31 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

859 See, for example, "Raivaaja, neekerien katkera vihollinen." *Eteenpäin*, 24.8.1933.

same underlying ideas as lynch terror and Jim Crow: that black people were inferior and backward.[860]

During the Harlem riot of March 1935, the communists again severely criticized the way in which the unrest was represented in *Raivaaja*. A writer in *Eteenpäin* lamented that socialists had accused the communists of instigating the black violence, thereby completely ignoring the structural reasons for the riot: the unequal distribution of unemployment benefits, police brutality, high rents, infringements on voting rights and so on. The writer also argued that *Raivaaja*'s take on the Harlem skirmishes had again illustrated the socialists' inability to undertake proper class analysis.[861] Another writer noted that "the three brothers" – the socialist *Raivaaja,* the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset* and the Wobbly *Industrialisti* – had all adopted the same vacuous position on the violence: that it was a mere street fight without any background in the untenable situation of Harlem's black populace. The writer noted that at least the Wobbly newspaper had the good sense not to accuse communists of being behind the violence. Perhaps the proletarian readers of *Industrialisti* understood the class nature of the race question too well for them to be fooled, the communist writer surmised. What is more, the writer lamented that the socialist and conservative newspapers fully embraced the anti-communist and anti-black agenda of New York's yellow press.[862]

860 Solianteri: "Industrialisti lynkkausterrorin edustajana." *Eteenpäin*, 7.10.1934.

861 Esa: "Raivaajan häpeällinen esiintyminen." *Eteenpäin*, 26.3.1935.

862 Sirppi: "Kolme veljestä veistää samaa puuta." *Eteenpäin*, 28.3.1935. On *Eteenpäin*'s coverage of the 1935 Harlem riot, see also "Raivostunut väkijoukko ja poliisit taistelleet N.Y. Harlemin kaupunginosassa." *Eteenpäin*, 21.3.1935; "Neekeriväestöä terroriseerataan N.Y. Harlem kaupunginosassa." *Eteenpäin*, 22.3.1935; "Neekeri- ja valkoihoiset työläiset! Liittykää yhteen rotusotaa ja provokaatiota vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 23.3.1935; "Beating of Negro Boy Rouses Masses of Harlem." *Eteenpäin*, 24.3.1935; "Luokkaviholisen lehdistö kiihottaa lynkkausmielialaa." *Eteenpäin*, 24.3.1935; "N.Y. neekeriväestön kurjaa asemaa yritetään peittää punakauhulla." *Eteenpäin*, 24.3.1935; " Tutkimusta murhan suhteen vaaditaan D. Workerin taholta."

However, while there were communist Finns who wanted to do their utmost to prove their commitment to the struggle for black rights, there was also significant disinterest – and outright hostility – towards the issue among the rank and file. Articles in *Eteenpäin* bemoaned how New York's Finnish communists had still not realized the importance of the race question, which was reflected, for example, in the low attendance of Finns at Scottsboro protests and in discussion meetings on the race question.[863] In a self-critical assessment of its work in fighting white chauvinism in August 1931, the Educational Committee of the Harlem Labor Temple stated that an investigation had uncovered several incidents that showed "strong attitudes of white chauvinism [being] still rampant among the Federation membership. […] This white chauvinistic tendency is not limited to a few individuals but is shared more generally."[864] Incidents of white chauvinism continued in Harlem: a man was expelled from the Communist Party for not selling tickets to blacks for an event at the Labor Temple.[865] A woman was also expelled from the party for owning shares in a restaurant that denied business to black customers.[866]

Eteenpäin, 26.3.1935; "Silminnäkijät kertovat Harlemin, N.Y. murhasta." *Eteenpäin*, 27.3.1935; "Kurjuus syynä Harlemin tapahtumiin, selittää maj. LaGuardianin komitea." *Eteenpäin*, 28.3.1935.

863 Jusupoffi: "Keskustelukokouksilla mitataan yhdistysjäsenistön tietoisuutta." *Eteenpäin*, 25.5.1931; "Suuri mielenosoitus Harlemissa etelän murhatuomioita vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 30.6.1931.

864 "Rotuennakkoluulojen poiskitkeminen N.Y:n yhdistysväen mielistä," *Eteenpäin*, 1.9.1931; Minutes of the FWF's New York branch meeting, 28 August 1931.

865 "Rotuennakkoluulojen poiskitkeminen N.Y:n yhdistysväen mielistä," *Eteenpäin*, 1.9.1931; Minutes of the FWF's New York branch meeting, 28 August 1931. The minutes of the meeting show that the suspended staff member's repeated drunkenness was also a factor in his suspension. The staff member's suspension was converted to full expulsion at a later meeting after it was established that he had engaged in activities with the "enemies" of the communists. See FWF's New York branch meeting, 11 October 1931.

866 She apologized, however, for her behavior in *Eteenpäin* and was thus probably readmitted to the Federation. See Ida Haapala: "Valkoshovinistisia

Another woman was expelled for not allowing black tenants in a co-operative building where she was a landlady.[867]

Incidents of white chauvinism among Finnish communists also continued elsewhere. The most sustained resistance to policies of desegregation were in Detroit, where a significant minority of the FWF's branch members lobbied against black children being allowed to attend a communist summer camp organized at a federation-owned camp on Loon Lake. While the majority of the shareholders wanted to transform the previously all-Finnish summer camp into an international pioneer camp, at least a third of the members voted against this – with some parents threatening to pull their children out of the camp if black kids were allowed to attend.[868] In Cleveland, a communist Finn refused to rent a room to a black couple and was expelled after a trial of his peers.[869] Moreover, the problem was not only confined within the United States. Finns studying in Moscow's Lenin School also discussed the problem of white chauvinism among them, and at least one American was expelled from the institute for this reason.[870]

In Harlem, Finnish communists continued to argue for closer social and political relations between black and Finnish residents

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harhakäsitteitä vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 8.3.1933.

867 NY Area Finnish Workers Federation's meeting minutes, 1.1.1933. Finnish Workers Federation, New York, papers, IHRC, University of Minnesota. The meeting decided to organize a demonstration in front of the woman's apartment.

868 "Suomalaisten naisten toiminnasta Detroitissa." *Eteenpäin*, 21.7.1931; "Pioneerikoulu ja rotukysymys." *Eteenpäin*, 1.7.1932; "Luokkataistelurintamalta Detroitista." *Eteenpäin*, 2.7.1932; S.S.: "Kirje Detroitista, Mich." *Eteenpäin*, 3.7.1932; "Rotuennakkoluulot raatelemassa Detroitin suom. työläisten yhteistoimintaa." *Eteenpäin*, 12.8.1932; Jörö Möttönen: "Loon Leikiltä taas pitkästä aikaa." *Punikki*, 15.9.1932; "Rotuvihaa nähtävissä Detroitissa, Mich." *Eteenpäin*, 7.12.1932.

869 "Toverioikeuden lautakunnan päätös Emil Verner Sihvosen valkoshovinismijutussa." *Eteenpäin*, 22.11.1932.

870 Joni Krekola: *Stalinismin lyhyt kurssi. Suomalaiset Moskovan Lenin-koulussa. 1926–1938.* SKS: Helsinki 2006, pp. 146-147.

well into the 1940s, even though the Finns of Harlem were increasingly moving to Brooklyn, New Jersey and white suburbs around New York. After the August 1943 race riot in Harlem, a columnist in *Eteenpäin* lamented how his compatriots too often complained about black people invading their neighborhood without first looking into the economic and social hardships black people had to go through. Finns, living "here in America's melting pot of nationalities and races," should do away with racial prejudice and acquaint themselves with the life of black people in Harlem, Detroit and other cities that they co-inhabited. [871] Similar calls for interracial solidarity were made also by non-Finnish political actors in Harlem. In 1944, as Adams Clayton Powell, Jr. campaigned for a seat in Congress in New York, he was accused by his adversaries of putting "Negroes first," and thus reinforcing racial strife in the neighborhood. Addressing a Finnish audience in Harlem, Powell contested this reading and presented himself as a representative of a decidedly multiracial Harlem:

> It is true that there are 310,000 Negroes in Harlem, but there are also 100,000 Puerto Ricans, 2,000 Chinese, 3,000 Italians, 5,000 Finns, […] 5,000 Irishmen, Jews, and Latin Americans, other than Puerto Ricans. I promise to represent this district first… not only the Negro people, but each and every citizen of this area irrespective of race, creed, or political affiliation. [872]

* * *

871 Kalervo: "Suomalaisilla syytä tutustua Harlemin neekerien oloihin." *Eteenpäin*, 6.8.1943. In the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset*, the 1943 riot in Harlem was interpreted as yet another demonstration that Finns had to move away from the purportedly violent and sexually predatory blacks. See Seppo: "Mihin suomalaisten keskusta Harlemista?" *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 2.9.1943.

872 "Powell Changes 'Negroes First.'" *New York Amsterdam News*, 6.5.1944. I would like to thank Daniel Acosta Elkan for bringing this article to my attention and for sending me a copy.

Scholars of European immigrants and whiteness have argued that the rhetoric of interracial solidarity of the Communist Party and other progressives reinforced radical immigrants' association with whiteness. In his analysis of the "racial syntax of the Yokinen trial," Matthew Frye Jacobson has noted that the trial's discourse began to "hint at the homogenous 'white' racial identity that the Negro Question was helping to enforce." The Communist Party rhetoric on race encouraged, and even demanded, that the party's Jewish, Italian, Lithuanian, Finnish and other European immigrant members identify themselves with whiteness, rather than with nationality, implying that divisions of color were more real than divisions of nationality.[873] The Communist Party rhetoric of white chauvinism encouraged Finnish communists to think of themselves first and foremost as whites, especially when articulating their contact with black Americans. Hence, "by discursively dividing the social world into [whites and Negroes]," the Communist Party "made a powerful statement to Italians and other European Americans about 'their' whiteness."[874] It is small wonder, then, that when Mark Naison sought to research the specific experiences of Jewish communists in Harlem in the 1930s, he was confronted with a tricky methodological problem: the party did not provide an ethnic breakdown of its Harlem cadre, but subsumed Jews (and other Europeans) within the generic term "white."[875]

Indeed, the rhetoric imposed by the Communist Party on race encouraged Finnish-American communists to identify with whiteness. Official statements issued by chapters of the Finnish Workers' Federation on white chauvinism provide a clear illustration of this trend: they subsumed Finns within the generic rubric of white.[876] But while engagement with CPUSA rhetoric on

873 Jacobson 1999, p. 254.

874 Guglielmo 2003, p. 138.

875 Naison 2005, p. 321.

876 The Baltimore branch's resolution on white chauvinism, for example, protested against "all those *whites, be they Finns or of any other nationality,* who have despised or insulted a black person." Baltimoren työväenyhdis-

race encouraged identification with whiteness, and discouraged an emphasis on intra-white divisions, Finnish-American communists did not altogether disassociate themselves from national labels. Rather, there were strong discursive currents that worked to strengthen their association with nationality: namely, the anti-fascist struggle directed their gaze to Europe, while they also actively engaged with Soviet discussions on the nationality question.

tys: "Baltimoren, Md., työväenyhdistyksen lausunto rotu- ja kansallisuuskysymyksestä," *Eteenpäin*, 18.1.1931. Italics mine.

5. Antifascist Nationalism: the Contradictions of the Popular Front

Adolf Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in 1933, and the upsurge of fascism in other parts of Europe, affected radical movements on both sides of the Atlantic. Since 1928, the communist Left everywhere in the world, Germany included, had insisted that the real threat to working-class interests came from "social fascists," that is, the social democratic and liberal enablers of the Brown Shirts. Among Finnish Americans, this policy had manifested itself with the communists' relentless attacks against their socialist, Wobbly and co-operative rivals. At its Congress in Moscow in 1935, the Communist International finally abandoned its ultra-leftist Third Period position and started to advocate for broad antifascist coalitions with the non-Communist left and the liberal center. However, mere political coalition building was not enough; fascism needed to be confronted on the ideological battlefield as well. As Francine Hirsch has illustrated, Soviet ethnographers engaged in the 1930s in a sustained effort to challenge Nazi claims regarding inherent racial essence and the inferiority of non-Aryan peoples.[877] But this ideological challenge also took other forms. In his seminal speech at the 1935 Congress, the Comintern Secretary, Georgii Dimitrov, argued that communists should stop sneering at workers' national feelings and start to "acclimatize" their internationalism to national contexts. They should, for example, make use of national symbols and fight fascist fabrications of national history by foregrounding their own interpretations of their nations' radical pasts. While communists

877 Hirsch 2005, pp. 247–252.

should not cease to point out how the bourgeoisie oppressed its own people and those of other nations, they should also make the case that they were fighting for the future of their own nation. This "correct and practical application of the Leninist national policy" was important since it was an essential weapon against chauvinism, which was the "main instrument of ideological influence of the fascists upon the masses."[878]

This chapter examines the Finnish immigrant Left's attempts to grapple with the contradictions of the Popular Front – the insistence that the Left should fight fascism and chauvinism by constructing progressive versions of nationalism. Finnish-American leftists sought to "acclimatize" their antifascism as Finns, Americans and Finnish-Americans. They were involved in the construction of a specifically Finnish form of socialism in Soviet Karelia (an autonomous republic for the USSR's Finnish and Karelian minority nationalities); they participated in the U.S. Communist Party's many Popular Front campaigns as American patriots; and they were involved in the efforts to construe a new, hyphenated Finnish-American identification in the 1930s. These latter efforts culminated in 1938 in the tercentenary of New Sweden, the short-lived seventeenth-century Swedish colony on the Delaware River (1638–1655). Since the colony included Finnish-speakers, the tercentenary was also celebrated as the three-hundred-year anniversary of Finns in America. Indeed, leftist Finns in the 1930s did not easily switch from a national identity towards a cross-national white worker identity. Rather, competing forms of identification continued to coexist in tension, reinforced by the cross-border politics of the Finnish-American Left.

878 Georgii Dimitrov: "The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism." In Georgi Dimitrov: *Selected Works. Volume 2.* Sofia Press: Sofia 1972.

5.1. Karelian Fever: Formulating Progressive Finnishness

In its program on the so-called Negro question, the U.S. Communist Party not only argued for full political, economic and social equality between races, but also for black national self-determination. The party argued that black southerners, as an oppressed minority nationality, should have the right to their own independent state in the so-called Black Belt, that is, those areas of the South where black people were in the majority.[879] Historiography of the party has often decried the impracticality of this Leninist policy, but for many immigrant communists it could open up interesting possibilities for comparison and analogy: the position of black people in the South was theoretically similar, if not wholly analogous, to the position of Finns and many other minority nationalities in the Soviet Union. For the communist women's magazine *Työläisnainen*, the national self-determination of black Americans was not inconsistent with the goals of revolutionary workers:

> This has been proved in the Soviet Union where even much smaller areas have been given self-determination when they are populated primarily by the same nationality. Red Karelia, whose population is miniscule when compared to the South's Negro populace, is an autonomous republic with its own government and own cultural pursuits. And it has made great progress, as have all the other autonomous areas of different nationalities within the borders of the Soviet Union.[880]

In the midst of the anti-chauvinist educational campaign this comparison could be used to persuade Finnish communists of their duty to support black liberation. In an April 1931 editorial, *Työmies* argued that Finns who supported the national self-determination of minority nationalities, like Finns, and the struggle against Great Russian chauvinism in the Soviet Union should

879 Solomon 1998, pp. 68–94.

880 "Kaikista eniten sorretut." *Työläisnainen*, 31.12.1930.

not make an exception with the black nationality in the United States.[881] Other immigrant communists also drew on these theoretical similarities. Jewish Communists, for instance, coupled the struggle against anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism in Russia with the struggle against white chauvinism in America.[882] These references to the theoretically similar position between black Americans and Soviet Finns is a reminder of the cross-border political imagination of Finnish radicals in the United States. While their rhetoric emphasized assimilation into the U.S. labor movement, they were also intimately connected with political developments across the Atlantic, not only in Finland but also in the Soviet Union, with its large Finnish population.

The Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was one of dozens of autonomous republics, oblasts and other administrative regions that the Bolshevik regime established for non-Russian Soviet nationalities. Established in 1920, it was designated as the socialist homeland for Soviet Union's Finnish and Karelian nationalities. Its establishment was partly to counter Finnish irredentist nationalism, which called for the purportedly oppressed Karelians to be able to join the newly independent Finnish state. These diplomatic and geopolitical factors were complemented with ideological considerations. When assessing the lands of the Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks understood that their empire was composed of several nationalities at different stages of development. The Soviet authorities considered the division of the country into national units to be the best way of securing the development of socialism in the vast realm. The country was divided into dozens of national units – republics, oblasts, and other administrative regions – in which the Soviet authorities encouraged the development of national institutions and cultures. Yet, this encouragement of national cultures was underlined by an economic logic: national cultures were supported so as to accelerate

881 "Kansojen itsemääräämisoikeudesta." *Työmies,* 12.4.1931. See also "Oikeistolaisuutta vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 13.3.1931; "Vähemmistökansallisuuden vapaudet sosialismia rakentavassa maassa." *Eteenpäin*, 16.8.1933.

882 Goldstein 2006, pp. 161–162.

the nationality's development along the Marxist timeline from feudalism to capitalism to socialism and finally to communism. According to the assessments of Soviet leaders, the Finnish émigré communists, who had fled Finland after the Civil War, were the most "advanced" ethnographic element within Karelia. They were well versed in socialist politics and came from a country with an economy the Bolsheviks deemed as an example of "developed capitalism." Thus, they were the most capable element that could uplift the purportedly backward population of the region and to usher in a modern, scientific socialist economy.[883]

Finnish emigrants shared this sentiment about their relative advancement vis-à-vis Karelians and Russians in Karelia. Many Finnish communist leaders of Karelia, including Edvard Gylling and Kustaa Rovio, had been immersed in nineteenth-century and early twentieth century Finnish Karelianism, which "made them think of Soviet Karelia in terms of a dark territory that had to be raised to the level of the civilized West, only that the West was now framed in socialist terms."[884] Heino Rautio, who served as the head of Karelian educational work, noted, for example, in 1924 that since the Finnish working class was more developed in "worker-civilizational terms" (*työläissivistyksellisessä mielessä*) than the indigenous population that "had lived hidden in Karelia's woodlands," Finnish workers should take a predominant role in the development of the autonomous republic.[885] Indeed, key positions in Karelian soviets, the Communist Party bureaucracy, state administration, factories, paramilitary organizations, cultural and educational institutions and the armed forces were occupied by Finns, who were a miniscule demographic among

883 Alexey Golubev & Irina Takala: *The Search for a Socialist Eldorado: Finnish Immigration to Soviet Karelia from the United States and Canada in the 1930s.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, p. 13. On Soviet nationality policies more broadly, see Francine Hirsch: *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2005.

884 Golubev & Takala 2014, p. 13.

885 Quoted in Kangaspuro 2000, p. 143.

the predominantly Russian and Karelian population. Alexey Golubev and Irina Takala have contended that the émigré Red Finns effectively became a "colonial administration" in Soviet Karelia.[886] They sought to "rationalize" the Karelian economy, create an "ethnic proletariat" by encouraging the recruiting of Karelians and Finns to industrial jobs, and institutionalized Finnish as the language of instruction in Karelian schools. Golubev and Takala have noted that "In the early 1930s, the attempts of Red Finns to consolidate Karelians into an ethnic community took the shape of a civilizing mission, in which Finnish communists imposed and enforced their language and culture on the Karelian population."[887] Many Karelians did not take kindly to this imposition of Finnish rule. A Karelian worker in Kondupoga lamented that "[T]here are two classes in Karelia: exploiting Finns and exploited Russians and Karelians."[888]

In the historiography of Soviet Karelia, the attachment of the Finnish émigré leadership to Finnish nationalism has often been represented as something they brought with them from Finland and which was foreign to Soviet communism and inevitably pushed them into conflict with the antinationalist Moscow. While certainly true to an extent, this interpretation misses the use of nationality as a political concept that was encouraged and often even demanded by the Soviet authorities in the 1920s and early 1930s. Thus, while the authorities of the Karelian ASSR did find space in the 1920s and early 1930s to defend their own inter-

886 Golubev & Takala 2014, pp.13-14. Soviet economists and Communist Party leaders were at pains to distinguish between oppressive European and American colonialism, on the one hand, and benign Soviet colonization, on the other. See Hirsch 2005, p. 91.

887 Ibid. p. 96.

888 Quoted in Golubev & Takala, p. 112. On Soviet nationality policies in Karelia, see also Auvo Kostiainen: *Dominating Finnish Minority? On the Background of the Nationality Problem in Soviet Karelia in the 1930s.* Department of History, University of Oulu: Oulu 1985; Kangaspuro 2000. On ethnic strife in 1930s Karelia, see Alexis E. Pogorelskin: "Pipeline Accident on Lake Onega: A Study of Ethnic Conflict in Soviet Karelia, 1934." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2004, pp. 176–88.

ests against the Soviet state, as Markku Kangaspuro has illustrated,[889] they did so by resorting to Soviet conceptual frameworks. Kangaspuro has noted that Soviet attempts to use nationalism in the 1920s awakened the national consciousness of ethnic groups and that the elites of autonomous republics used "ethnicity and nationalism from the beginning" as a weapon against attempts by the Soviet state to impose an all-Union identity.[890] This assertion misses the extent to which the vocabulary of nationality was itself imposed on the elites by the Soviet authorities. As Hirsch notes, by 1930 "[p]eople throughout the Soviet Union were using the language of the Soviet state – and the vocabulary of nationality in particular – to fight for resources and assert their rights."[891]

This vocabulary of nationality was encouraged by the Soviet state and was also taken up by Finnish-American communists through Soviet Finnish intermediaries. Finnish-American communist newspapers published articles on Soviet nationality policies in Karelia[892] and other parts of the USSR. They covered the advancement of socialism, for example, in the purportedly backward areas of Muslim Central Asia, the Caucasus and Siberia.[893] Many of these articles were translations of texts produced by the Comintern or Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but some were written by Soviet Finns. In 1928, for example, *Eteenpäin* published its correspondent's interview with an Azeri worker, who recounted the progress the Caucasus region had made in terms of literacy, industrial development and women's rights.

889 Kangaspuro 2000.

890 Kangaspuro 2000, p. 375.

891 Ibid. p. 186.

892 See, for example, Santeri Nuorteva: "Karjalan Neuvostotasavalta." *Eteenpäin*, 17.12.1927.

893 See, for example, "Mitä Neuvostovalta on saanut aikaan Taka-Kaukasiassa." *Eteenpäin*, 17.7.1928; "Kirjeenvaihtajamme havaintoja ja haastatteluja Neuvostoliitossa." *Eteenpäin*, 3.7.1928; "Leniniläinen kansallisuuspolitiikka käytännössä." *Eteenpäin*, 3.11.1931; "XIV lokakuu ja kansallisuuskysymys." *Eteenpäin*, 3.12.1931; "Neuvostoliiton kaukaisesta idästä." *Eteenpäin*, 7.3.1935.

The Azeri worker greeted the Finnish-American communists and asked them to "Tell the workers in the west and north that whereas we previously lived in miserable shacks we now for the most part live in gardened neighborhoods and go forward all the time."[894] The advance of women's rights in Soviet Asia was often highlighted to illustrate the progressive character of Soviet socialism. These accounts drew a sharp contrast between the "dark" past of Muslim oppression against women and the emancipatory qualities of Soviet power – seen most concretely in the unveiling of Muslim women in Soviet Asia.[895]

These articles on the progress of Soviet socialism in "backward" parts of the USSR, whether in Karelian woods or on the Central Asian steppes, were based on the notion of "spatial time." This was based on the idea that nationalities and races not only occupied different places, but also different times. Soviet power had instigated a project of "state-sponsored evolutionism." As Hirsch notes, it was "a Soviet version of the civilization mission that combined the idea of cultural evolutionism […] with the Marxist theory of history […] and added to it the Leninist conceit that revolutionary actors could speed up historical progress."[896] This approach suggested that the diversity found within the former Russian Empire was not only spatial and cultural, but also temporal: different peoples of the realm were experiencing different stages of historical development. That the advancement of some peoples had been stunted was no fault of their own. The reactionary nature of Tsarist rule had prevented the development of capitalism in the areas it had colonized, which explained the

894 "Kirjeenvaihtajamme havaintoja ja haastatteluja Neuvostoliitossa." *Eteenpäin*, 3.7.1928. See also "Viestille kirje Bakusta." *Viesti*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1931, pp. 474-479.

895 See, for example, "Naisten aseman parantaminen aasialaisessa maailmassa." *Eteenpäin*, 2.2.1928; "Muhamettilaisen naisen valveutuminen." *Eteenpäin*, 2.6.1928; "Kirjeenvaihtajamme havaintoja ja haastatteluja Neuvostoliitossa." *Eteenpäin*, 3.7.1928. On the Bolshevik politics of gender in Soviet Central Asia, see Douglas Northrop: *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2003.

896 Hirsch 2005, p. 86.

backwardness of peoples on the Siberian steppes, the Far East and Central Asia.[897] Soviet experts insisted that state efforts could speed up the advancement of backward peoples on the Marxist timeline. Georgii Broido, an administrator in the Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnats) argued in 1923 that by "emancipat[ing] the consciousness" of backward nationalities, the state authorities could effectively rush these peoples from feudal times to capitalism, socialism, and eventually to communism.[898]

However, the most thorough way in which Soviet nationality politics influenced Finnish-American communism was through migration. As part of its Finnicization project, the Finnish leadership of Karelia encouraged Finnish immigration to the republic. Systematic migration of Finns from Finland was difficult for political reasons, so the Karelian leadership directed its gaze across the Atlantic. There had been a trickle of American Finns to Soviet Karelia since the October Revolution, but this trickle turned into a flood in the early 1930s. With Moscow's support, the Karelian ASSR mounted a large-scale recruiting campaign in the United States and Canada to woo Finns to migrate to Karelia. The economic hardships of Depression-era North America made such migration an appealing choice for many. Political and cultural reasons gave an added incentive.

Many were intrigued by the communist press's image of the Soviet Union as the "fatherland of workers," which was untouched by the economic hardships of the capitalist world, as well as being excited by the possibility to be able to personally help in the construction of socialism. The promises made by Karelian recruiters that Finns could live in Karelia and would be able to speak Finnish and be immersed in Finnish culture was also an important factor. For immigrants frustrated with their lack of English language skills and put off by the nativist contempt shown to them, the opportunity to live in a Finnish-language en-

897 On accounts in the Finnish-American press of how tsarism had stunted Karelian development, see, for example, "Kirje Vienan Karjalasta." *Eteenpäin*, 18.12.1927.

898 Hirsch 2005, p. 86.

vironment, in which Finnishness would be not only an asset but a privilege seemed appealing. Recruiters promised that the ethnic hierarchies of America would be reversed in Karelia: in the Soviet republic, Finns "would be the first among other immigrants and have a higher social status because of their ethnicity."[899] These socioeconomic, political and cultural reasons combined to form a powerful mix, instigating what can be labelled a fully-fledged Karelian fever: in the early 1930s, some 6,000 Finns from the United States and Canada made their way to the Soviet Union.[900]

The Finnish-American communist movement's approach to this mass migration was ambivalent. On the one hand, it could hardly oppose the desire of members to leave the capitalist world for the proletarian fatherland. The immigration scheme had official Soviet support and its organizers were some of the most respected Finnish communists. Thus, the communist press and the FWF leadership could not openly censure the project. But the Finnish-American communist movement was afraid of losing its due-paying base and its most active cadres to immigration, and for good reason. Many towns and villages saw most or all communist Finns leave for Karelia, leaving the workers' halls empty, organizational duties unattended and party dues and newspaper subscriptions left unpaid. Thus, while not openly against the Karelian immigration program, the Finnish-American communist leadership and press never put their full weight behind this Karelian fever, which makes the scale of the immigration even more astonishing.[901]

Thus, while hesitant to fully support this immigration, the Finnish-American communist press still enthusiastically followed the progress of socialism in Karelia and Finns' predominant role in this development. Soviet nationality policies were frequently contrasted favorably with the imperialistic oppres-

899 Golubev & Takala 2014, pp. 39-40.

900 Kivisto 2014, pp. 303-304.

901 Evgeny Efremkin: "Recruitment in North America: An Analysis of Emigrants to Soviet Karelia, 1931–1934." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1–2, November 2011, pp. 101–123.

sion of minority nationalities and races in the United States. An *Eteenpäin* editorial noted, for example, that "America is an imperialistic country that oppresses and enslaves whole nations in its colonies, just like it oppresses and enslaves minority nationalities in its 'homeland,' with racial oppression against the Negroes as the most typical example. Only proletarian revolution fully frees the minority nationalities. The experiences of Finns in the Soviet Union, when compared to the yoke of tsarism, is a concrete proof of this."[902] The communist press extensively covered the cultural achievements in Karelia and celebrated the establishment of the new national proletarian culture. When a Finnish-language radio station, for example, was opened in remote Uhtua in 1933, *Eteenpäin* celebrated the event by connecting this modern accomplishment to the Finnish past. Uhtua was one of the villages where Elias Lönnrot had collected poems for *The Kalevala*, the Finnish national epoch first published in 1835, and the establishment of the new radio station was put on a continuum of the progress of Finnish culture, which was still national in form but was now also socialist in content. The *Eteenpäin* article proclaimed that as *The Kalevala* had spread the message of the forging of the great *Sampo*, a mythical artifact that brought riches to its holder, the Uhtua radio station would spread the message of the forging of tools that would build socialism.[903] When Finland celebrated the centenary of *The Kalevala* in 1935, the event was also marked in

902 "Vähemmistökansallisuuden oikeudet sosialismia rakentavassa maassa." *Eteenpäin*, 16.8.1933. See also "Kymmenvuotias Karjalan neuvostotasavalta – leniniläisen kansallisuuspolitiikan voittojen todiste." *Eteenpäin*, 20.8.1933; "Aate kansojen yhdistämisestä ei ole periaatteellisesti neuvostovaltion ja sen ideologian vastainen." *Eteenpäin*, 7.10.1934; "Totuuksia Neuvosto-Karjalasta." *Eteenpäin*, 12.12.1934; J. Viitanen: "Neuvostoliiton kansallisuuspolitiikan voittoja." *Eteenpäin*, 2.2.1935. See also K. Rovio: "Kielikysymys Neuvosto-Karjalan kansallisuuspolitiikassa." *Viesti*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1931 pp. 757-764.

903 "Uusi mahtava kulttuuririntaman voitto Karjalassa." *Eteenpäin*, 17.10.1933. In *Kalevala* mythology, *Sampo* was a magical artefact that created things, like gold and flour, for its owner.

Soviet Karelia and covered enthusiastically by the Finnish-American Communist press.[904]

The communist nationalism in Karelia drew a sharp distinction to the purportedly fascist nationalism in Finland. These differences were most thoroughly explored by Yrjö Sirola, a key émigré leader in the Moscow-based Communist Party of Finland, who had briefly lived in the United States in the early 1910s.[905] Sirola wrote about the development of Finnish national sentiment in Karelia for a book celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of Soviet Karelia, which was published in New York in 1935. Sirola was at pains to distinguish Soviet Karelianism from "fascistic" ethnology and folklore studies in contemporary Finland. Sirola contended that whereas the study of *The Kalevala*, and Finnish folklore in general, had been reduced to propaganda purposes in Finland on behalf of the fascistic and imperialistic foreign policy of Finland against the Soviet Union, the research conducted in Soviet Karelia aimed at higher scientific purposes. First, the Soviet study of folklore rejected the myth of national isolation. Rather, it examined *The Kalevala* not as an isolated cultural product that had been born out of Finnish ingenuity, but as a collection of poems and tales that showed a wide variety of cultural influences. Socialist researchers were not afraid to point out that not all of *The Kalevala* was original; many of its stories bore a resemblance to tales told by other nationalities "as far away as in India." Thus, *The Kalevala* was a living testament to "the interactions between nations in ancient times" and could be seen as a precursor of socialist internationalism. Sirola noted that Russian influences were particularly prominent in *The Kalevala*, testifying to the centuries-old interactions between Karelians, Finns and Russians.

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904 "Kalevalan 100-vuotispäivä." *Eteenpäin*, 6.3.1935; "Kalevala-näyttely Petroskoissa." *Eteenpäin*, 10.3.1935; Yrjö Sirola: "Kalevalan 100-vuotisjuhlajuhlan johdosta." *Eteenpäin*, 16.3.1935.

905 He worked as a teacher at the Work Peoples College and contributed to socialist newspapers. In 1915, he wrote a a series of articles for *Sosialisti* criticizing the Socialist Party's policy of Asiatic exclusion.

Second, socialist folklore research also countered the bourgeois myth about the unchangeable and static nature of national culture. Socialist research on folklore demonstrated that culture was not an unchangeable feature of national essence, but was an ever-changing reflection of shifting class formations and productive relations. As the socialist revolution was rapidly changing the economic base of society, it was also giving birth to new forms of cultural expression. Sirola noted that Karelian poets were already singing the praises of the October Revolution, and collectors of folklore had recorded "many songs about Comrade Antikainen," a hero of the revolutionary war in Karelia who had been jailed in Finland for his communist activities.[906] Thus, national culture in Karelia was in continuous flux, making nonsense of bourgeois claims of an unchanging form of Finnishness. It also served to challenge the idea that Karelian backwardness was a reflection of some inherent cultural essence. Rather, Karelians, like all backward peoples, could and would shed their cultural stasis when exposed to industrial socialism. This was an observation Sirola had made already in 1915, as he commented in a Finnish-American socialist newspaper about the debate on Asian immigration in the American Socialist Party. He had then argued that "no race is incapable of capitalistic economic life or culture because of its racial characteristics."[907] Yet, Sirola's contentions were also firmly in line with current trends in Soviet research on folklore and ethnology. As Hirsch has illustrated, Soviet ethnology in the 1930s emphasized the mixed and malleable character of national cultures, partly as an ideological challenge to the Nazi cult of purity and inherent inequality.[908]

906 Yrjö Sirola: "Karjala – laulujen maa." In *Neuvosto-Karjalan 15-vuotiselta taipaleelta 1920–1935*. Finnish Federation, Inc.: New York 1935, pp. 17–19. See also Yrjö Sirola: "Kalevalan 100-vuotisjuhlajuhlan johdosta." *Eteenpäin*, 16.3.1935. Soviet linguistic research on Finno-Ugric languages, and this research's differences to bourgeois research in Finland, was also covered. See "Suomalais-ugrilaisten kielten tutkimustyö Neuvostoliitossa." *Eteenpäin*, 24.6.1928.

907 Yrjö Sirola: "Siirtolaisuuden rajoituspuuhat." *Sosialisti*, 1.3.1915.

908 Hirsch 2005, pp. 247–252.

This celebration of Finnish proletarian nationalism came to an abrupt end in 1935 in Karelia and also a little later in North America. Reflecting a broader shift in Stalin's nationality policies, since 1933 the Soviet authorities had increasingly accused the Karelian ASSR leadership of promoting bourgeois Finnish nationalism and dismissing the cultural needs of the Karelian and Russian majority of the republic. Whereas the main threat to socialism in Karelia had previously been deemed to be Great Russian chauvinism, it was now the nationalism of minority nationalities (i.e. the Finns), which was seen as the major threat. This increasing criticism of "local nationalism" came to a head in 1935, when much of Karelia's Finnish leadership was purged. Edvard Gylling and Kustaa Rovio were removed from their leadership posts and were later arrested for allegedly being complicit in a bourgeois nationalist plot to steer Karelia away from socialism. The Finnish émigré leadership was largely replaced with non-Finns. Moreover, the Karelian press started a militant campaign against Finnish anti-Russian and anti-Karelian chauvinism. These changes were in line with Stalin's revised approach to the nationality question. Increasingly concerned about the threat of German Nazism and the irredentist nationalism of the Soviet Union's neighbors, Stalin turned to Russian nationalism and the suppression of potentially dangerous minority nationalisms (German, Polish, Estonian, Finnish, etc.).[909]

In North America, the full gravity of this shift did not immediately become apparent. In 1935, the New York-based Finnish Workers' Federation published a book on Soviet Karelia to celebrate the republic's fifteenth anniversary. The book's take on the nationality question still reflected the now-problematic notion that Great Russian chauvinism, not Finnish nationalism, was the greatest threat to socialism, and that Karelia was to be built as the national homeland of Soviet Finns. Soviet authorities used the publication of this book to illustrate how Finnish communists had failed to understand the danger posed by Finnish na-

909 Golubev & Takala 2014, pp. 125–134.

tionalism to the development of socialism in Karelia.[910] In the late 1930s, the Finnish-American communist press significantly toned down its celebration of Finnish national culture in Karelia. It also remained silent when the anti-nationalist campaign in Karelia acquired increasingly sinister tones and as Finnish Americans became a key target of the campaign.

From the fall of 1935 onwards, the Finnish and Russian-language press of Karelia harshly criticized Finnish Americans for their nationalistic and chauvinistic attitudes against Russians and Karelians. They were accused of discriminating against Russian and Karelian workers, failing to learn Russian, exaggerating their technological skills and that they kept to themselves in work places and at social events. In one its articles on the subject, the Finnish-language newspaper in Soviet Karelia, *Punainen Karjala*, admonished Finns at one factory club, who only danced in "the Finnish-American style" (*härmäläis-amerikalaiseen tyyliin*), which kept local people away.[911] These self-criticisms also soon found their way to the other side of the Atlantic, as Finnish-language communist newspapers in the U.S. and Canada started to publish letters from Finnish-American immigrants in Karelia. The letter writers told of the party purges that had been conducted in the Karelian party that had supposedly exposed giant networks of Finnish spies and saboteurs. They also admitted the errors in the Leninist nationality policy that had been committed: there had been too little emphasis on learning Russian and too much unwillingness to root out chauvinist attitudes. In February 1936, the newspapers published a letter from the former leader of Soviet Karelia, Edvard Gylling, in which he confessed to the errors in nationality policy, especially in terms of insufficient language-learning, and recounted how Soviet authorities had exposed a major infiltration operation of the Finnish intelligence service. He noted ominously that many immigrants from Finland

910 Reino Kero: *Neuvosto-Karjalaa rakentamassa: Pohjois-Amerikan suomalaiset tekniikan tuojina 1930-luvun Neuvosto-Karjalassa.* SHS: Helsinki 1983.

911 Kero 1983, pp. 175–181.

and North America, even old veterans of the labor movement, had carried with them "remnants of the ideologies of the capitalist world." This had made them blind to the increasing influence of Finnish intelligence agents and spies in their midst.[912]

In 1937 and 1938, the anti-nationalist campaign in Karelia descended into full-scale state terror. The NKVD's so-called Finnish operation was part of a much larger project of terror, which sought to clamp down on two related threats to the Soviet state: anti-Soviet "kulaks" and potentially treacherous national groups, such as Germans, Poles, Chinese and Finns. In Karelia, the operation began in March 1937, intensified in the fall of that year, and reached a terrifying crescendo in the spring and summer of 1938. The operation's stated intention was to root out a "counterrevolutionary bourgeois nationalist organization" that Edvard Gylling and other Red Finns had supposedly established in Karelia in 1920. Finnish-American immigrants were supposedly a key part of this conspiracy. The NKVD claimed that North American Finns had been recruited to help in the insidious plan to establish a fifth column for fascist Finland within Soviet borders. The chief organizers of the Karelian Technical Aid Committee—Matti Tenhunen, Oscar Corgan and Kalle Aronen, all redeemed veterans of the Finnish-American labor movement—were all arrested and shot. The people they had helped to immigrate also came under fire for being co-conspirators. Of the 4,688 Karelian Finns who were arrested in 1937 and 1938, at least 739 were North American immigrants. Some 85 percent of those who were arrested were put before NKVD firing squads. Finns were not the only group targeted by the terror in Karelia, but they bore the greatest brunt. While only constituting three percent of the population, they made up some forty percent of the Great Terror's victims in Karelia.[913]

912 Edvard Gylling: "Valheyllytys Neuvosto-Karjalaa vastaan." *Vapaus*, 1.2. 1936. See Kero 1983, pp. 183–184.

913 On the NKVD's "Finnish operation," see Michael Gelb: "Karelian Fever: The Finnish Immigrant Community During Stalin's Purges." *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6, November 1993; Kangaspuro 2000, pp. 344–354;

As the Stalinist purges against Finns intensified, Finnish-American and Canadian conservative and socialist newspapers covered them extensively by publishing rumors and first-hand accounts from disillusioned returnees. The communist newspapers, on the other hand, remained mostly silent. In November 1937, however, the Canadian communist newspaper, *Vapaus*, published an extensive article by the Finnish-American communist journalist Knut E. Heikkinen, who had lived in Karelia between 1932–1935, about the events in Karelia. Heikkinen elaborated on the NKDV's case against the "Trotskyite-Bukharanite enemies of the people, foreign fascists and bourgeois nationalists and saboteurs," and came out as being fully in support of the "house cleaning" underway in Karelia. He also noted that American Finns should take special interest in the operation as it targeted a conspiracy that had sprung up among "our own nationality." Finns in Karelia had isolated themselves from the local population, held Karelians and Russians in contempt and had refused to learn "the language of the revolution" or adopt Soviet neologisms to their bourgeois Finnish. (Heikkinen lamented that Finns in Karelia had insisted on talking about *neuvostot* ("Soviets") when a perfectly good Finnicized Russian word *sovietit* was available.) This contemptuous neglect of revolutionary vigilance had made possible the conspiracy of foreign fascists and spies, and the NKVD's victims deserved their fate. Heikkinen dismissed all concerns and sadness for the spies, agents and their enablers; what was important was that the red flag of revolution was kept flying "high and stainless."[914] Heikkinen, as with everyone else outside the Soviet

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Irina Takala: "The Great Purge." *Journal of Finnish Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1–2, November 2011, pp. 144–157; Golubev & Takala 2014, pp. 121–155. On the Great Terror more generally, see, for example, Robert Conquest: *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. Oxford University Press: Oxford 1990.

914 K. E. Heikkinen: "Mitä Karjalassa tapahtuu?" *Vapaus*, 5.11.1937. See also Kero 1983, pp. 187–189. Finnish-American communist newspapers also published articles that defended the NKVD's campaign against Finnish "fascists" and "spies" in Karelia. See "Säälimättä murskattava Karjalan kansan viholliset." *Työmies*, 5.10.1937; "Neuvosto-Karjalan tapahtumat ja taantumaporvaristo." *Työmies*, 24.10.1937.

Union, remained unaware of the full scale of the terror. Still, his cold-blooded rationalization, and even celebration, of the mass purges of his former comrades stands out as one of the more sinister chapters in the history of the Finnish-American labor movement. If Heikkinen had not left Karelia in 1935, he would have almost certainly perished in the NKVD's campaign, as a politically active Finn.[915]

The turn against Finnish nationalism in Soviet Karelia's nationality policies served to tone down the celebration of Finnish culture in Karelia and in the Finnish-American communist press after 1935. In the Karelian context, Finnish nationalism became a subject to criticize and denounce. Yet, other developments in the international communist movement worked in a different direction, and the ultra-leftist anti-nationalism of the Third Period's early years did not make a comeback in the Finnish-American communist press, even as Finnish chauvinistic nationalism in Karelia came under sustained attack. Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in 1933 and the rise of fascism elsewhere in Europe forced a strategic rethink at the Communist International. The Comintern had already toned down its Third Period ultra-leftism in 1933 and 1934, but the full change in policy came at its August 1935 Congress. The antifascist struggle required the abandonment of ideological puritanism and a new strategy that sought to attract masses to a broad antifascist coalition. Nationalism became an important weapon in this strategy.

915 For accounts of Finnish Americans and the Great Terror in Karelia, see Lawrence Hokkanen, Sylvia Hokkanen & Anita Middleton: *Karelia: A Finnish-American Couple in Stalin's Russia.* North Star Press of St. Cloud: St. Cloud, MN. 1991; Mayme Sevander: *They Took My Father: Finnish Americans in Stalin's Russia.* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 2004.

5.2. Toward "Americanization"

The Great Depression, the New Deal and the Popular Front have been seen as great ethnic unifiers. Labor and immigration historians have emphasized how these phenomena, all in their different but related ways, brought the more or less insular European immigrant groups into greater proximity and eased their amalgamation into a white American working class. Lizabeth Cohen, for example, has examined how Chicago's multiethnic industrial workers largely abandoned their ethnic institutions during the Great Depression in order to seek firmer protection in the multiethnic political coalitions of the Democratic Party and the multiethnic locals of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).[916] Matthew Frye Jacobson has noted how the politics of the Popular Front and the rhetoric of the Communist Party encouraged radicals of European descent to stress supra-ethnic identity as white workers.[917] In significant ways, the Depression era reinforced the shared sense of poverty among European immigrants. Indeed, when the WPA's interviewers collected oral history material among Minnesota's Finnish immigrants in the late 1930s and early 1940s, many of the people they spoke with told of their experiences of poverty and economic hardship, rather than in terms of nationality. Female WPA informants also discussed increasingly positive attitudes towards intermarriage between nationalities.[918] For politically active immigrants and their descendants, in particular, the 1930s were a time of increasing coalition-

916 Lizabeth Cohen: *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1990.

917 Jacobson 1998, pp. 246–273.

918 Interviews with Mrs. George Kuusisto (by Stanley Levine, 12 December 1938), Mrs. N. Kivi (by Stanley Levine, 20 October 1938), Martha Niemi (by Stanley Levine, 21 October 1938) Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

building outside the linguistic or national community – although the novelty of these endeavors should not be overstressed.[919]

Finnish-American discussions on Americanization had already intensified in the 1920s. Finnish-American conservatives were often troubled by their children's lack of appreciation of Finnish culture and language. More concerning still was the contempt that many had for Finnishness, which they associated with backwardness and inferiority. Many community leaders spoke in favor of a form of Americanization that would not denigrate the linguistic and cultural heritage they associated with Finnishness. John Wargelin, an influential Lutheran priest, distilled these sentiments in his 1924 work entitled *The Americanization of the Finns*, in which, on the one hand, he decried the bad image of Finns and other immigrants in the United States. However, on the other hand, he criticized the stubbornness of some immigrants, who were not willing to adopt the values and language of their new homeland. In many ways Wargelin issued an appeal for a hyphenated form of Americanism, whereby immigrants would assimilate but still retain their purported cultural traditions.[920]

Leftist Finns also continued to appeal for assimilation into the American working class. Unlike the conservatives, they were often not too concerned about holding on to supposedly age-old linguistic traditions or cultural heritage. In the first history of the Finnish-American labor movement, published in 1925, Frans Syrjälä, the long-time editor of the socialist *Raivaaja*, noted with pleasure the "Americanization" of the Finnish labor movement in America:

> This movement is no longer a part of the Finnish labor movement, and it is not supposed to be. It has to become an American movement. We must feel no sorrow over it. It does not function, and neither does it try to function, as a Finnish movement. It must

919 Per Nordahl: *Weaving the Ethnic Fabric: Social Networks among Swedish-American Radicals in Chicago, 1890–1940.* Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm 1994; Lubotina 2011.

920 Wargelin 1924.

> lose those peculiarities of Finnishness that have impeded the old generation in its attempts to approach the country's leading labor movement. […] Even the socialistic psychology of the Finnish, German, or Russian nation can never succeed within the American working class. Only the American interpretation and strategy, whatever they may be, can ensure the victory of [socialism] in this country.[921]

Syrjälä noted that while it might be hard for the older generation to witness their children becoming Americans, this was something that was inevitable and should be encouraged. Syrjälä maintained that the older generation would also Americanize to a certain extent. They would not lose their "national sympathies" towards their native land, but they would become "Finnish Americans" (*Ameriikan suomalaisia*) by becoming increasingly attached to American society and the American labor movement.[922]

This idea had held a central place in the discourse of the Finnish-American labor movement from the early 1900s. To be sure, there were occasional bitter remarks at Finnish socialist meetings about how their children were turning into "Finn-Yanks," who chewed gum and danced weirdly. However, these lamentations about cultural assimilation into American consumer culture did not easily translate into worries about children's political or societal assimilation.[923] Far from decrying this Americanization, communists, socialists, and Wobblies welcomed it. While some scholarship on the Finnish-American labor movement has maintained that the preservation of Finnish identity was a key concern for the movement,[924] this preservationism never enjoyed much official support. From the beginning, the Finnish-American labor movement encouraged its members to take up American citizen-

921 Syrjälä 1925, p. 219.

922 Syrjälä 1925, p. 219.

923 The remark on "Finn-Yanks" (*suomalaisjänkeiksi*) was by Leo Laukki. See Syrjälä [1910], pp. 221–222.

924 See, for example, Ronning 2003, p. 380.

ship, learn English and join U.S. labor organizations. Even the staunchest defenders of separate Finnish language federations in the Socialist Party and Workers Party saw them as temporary solutions that eased – rather than slowed down – adaptation to American society.

The co-operative movement was an important venue for this process. Finnish immigrants had established co-operative farms, dairies, stores and other businesses in the Midwest since the early 1900s. From early on these co-operative ventures were associated with political organizations. In the 1920s, the vast Central Cooperative Wholesale was controlled by communists, but its members were driven into a severe ideological conflict at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s when the CCW refused to grant a loan to the Communist Party. After a bitter fight and an intervention by the Comintern, the Midwestern co-operative movement split into non-ideological and communist branches. The latter had withered out by the late 1930s, but the non-ideological movement proved more persistent.[925] In the 1920s, many in the co-operative movement already wanted to direct the movement in a non-ideological direction, and these trends became stronger after the communist split. Michael Karni has explained the effect of the Depression era on the co-operative movement in the following way: "The cooperators came to see that 'consumerism' was a more important concept to rally around than questions of 'Finnish cooperators in the class struggle.'" The second generation, especially, was "imbued with a perspective that transcended purely Finnish problems."[926] Karni notes that many young co-operators chose to Anglicize their names and changed the language

925 Karni 1975, pp. 263–342. On the co-op movement, see Hannu Heinilä: *Osuustoimintaliikekasvatus USA:n Keskilännessä 1917–1963.* Siirtolaisuusinstituutti: Turku 2002; Hannu Heinilä: "'Sooner or Later You're a Co-Operator': The Finnish American Cooperative Movement." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* Michigan State University Press: East Lansing 2014, pp. 157–172.

926 Karni 1975, pp. 345–346. See also Peter Kivisto: "The Attenuated Ethnicity of Contemporary Finnish Americans." In Peter Kivisto (ed.): *The Ethnic*

of administration to English. The answer of a co-operative activist to a questionnaire on the ethnic composition of his co-operative venture is telling of this ethos of supra-ethnic Americanism that focused on business, rather than ideology or other purportedly parochial ties:

> It would take a good person possibly three or four solid days of work to get this information [about the co-operative's ethnic composition]. And it isn't worth it. Wouldn't have even three or four hours to waste on it. Where people were born, or why, is of no consequence to any Co-op. And the less Co-ops concern themselves with religion, politics, sex, or race of the members, the better for all. The same energy can be put to much better advantage. We never make a study of Poles, Swedes, Indians, French, German, Mexicans, Italians, or others. Regardless of their birth, or mother tongue, they are all cooperators. … they are all good people. … they are alike. … they all have an equal vote. … their dollars all have 100 cents. … they are all Americans. Their nationality is no more an issue to their Co-op than is the make of their car, or the grades their kids get in school.[927]

With the advent of the Popular Front, communist politics took a turn towards pragmatism and coalition-building. The period from 1933 to mid-1935 was, as Fraser Ottanelli has argued, "a transition away from the third-period analysis and policies toward what became known as People's Front; during this time both old and new analyses and policies co-existed, accounting

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Enigma: The Salience of Ethnicity for European-Origin Groups. The Balch Institute Press: Philadelphia 1989, pp. 71–72.

927 Quoted in Karni 1975, p. 362. Ellipses in Karni. One woman informant made much the same point for WPA interviewers in 1938: "Let me clear up a mis-understanding. The co-operative movement is certainly not limited to Finnish people, although it was originally started by Finnish immigrants in the North Central states." Interview with Miriam Sanda by Stanley Levine. 6 December 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

for the CPUSA's uneven and contradictory course."[928] The chief reasons for this reconsideration were the failed policy of setting up separate, "revolutionary" labor unions under the mantle of the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL), as well as miscalculations regarding the strength and nature of fascism. The Comintern's 1935 Congress gave new impetus and official legitimation for this change of course. After a period of uncertainty as to what the new Comintern line required of the American Communist Party, U.S. communists started to organize a broadly progressive third party, the Farmer-Labor Party. However, this was not a success and in late 1937 communists threw their support behind Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal. The communists started organizing political campaigns that aimed for broad progressive coalitions. The campaign for the Scottsboro Nine now welcomed co-operation from liberal black organizations, such as the previously much-maligned NAACP, as well as the non-communist left. The failed dual unionism of the Third Period was dropped and the communists actively participated in the organization of the Congress of the Industrial Organizations. They also mounted international campaigns, such as the protest movement against Italy's attack against Abyssinia in 1935 and the organization of a volunteer military force in the Spanish Civil War from 1936.[929]

This also changed the Finnish communists' approach to Americanization. In the 1920s and early 1930s, communist Finns had advocated for "Americanization in the Bolshevik sense of the term," as Henry Puro had put it.[930] This meant engagement with those ultra-leftist political campaigns that the Communist International and the U.S. Communist Party leadership had deemed to be in the best interests of the American working class, such as relentless attacks on the "social fascism" of the Socialist Party and the ridiculing of Democratic Party progressivism. In practice, this was not an ideological straight jacket but allowed for lo-

928 Ottanelli 1991, p. 49.

929 Ottanelli 1991, pp. 107–194.

930 Henry Puro: "Puolueen uudelleen järjestämisen probleemit." *Eteenpäin*, 18.10.1925.

cal variation.[931] Still, for many young immigrant communists this "Bolshevik Americanization" was a contradiction in terms. Rather than bringing them into contact with American working-class youth, it had the potential to make them appear hopelessly out of touch with the actual lives of U.S. youth. It is perhaps small wonder that in 1934 a young Finnish communist in Harlem lamented that their youth club had yet to attract a single black member.[932]

In 1933, Finnish-American communists, like the U.S. Communist Party in general, began to steer away from the uncompromising ultra-leftism of the early 1930s. From the spring of 1934, the Finnish-American communist press started to publish articles that called for a "popular front" (*yhteisrintama*) with rank-and-file members of the Socialist Party. Indeed, they published articles and speeches by Alex Bittelmann, Earl Browder and G. Bosse (Alfred J. Brooks) on the Popular Front in America and defended this thesis in editorials.[933] While still dismissive of the leadership of the Socialist Party and the "social fascist" newspapers *Raivaaja* and *Industrialisti*, the Finnish-American communist press was now more accommodating towards ordinary socialists. After the Comintern's 1935 Congress, the tone towards the non-Communist left became even more conciliatory. Georgi Dimitrov's speech at the Congress was published in Finnish in

931 See, for example, Naison 2005.

932 Mike Wästilä: "The Negro Question and the Youth Clubs." *Eteenpäin*, 23.9.1934. Wästilä also wrote about the history of the "Negro nationality" for the Finnish-language communist theoretical journal *Viesti.* See Mike Wästilä: "Kehitys maaorjuudesta neekerikansakuntaan." *Viesti*, Vol. 7, No. 5, May 1936, pp. 216–224.

933 See, for example, Alex Bittelmann: "Miksi yhteisrintama sosialifascistien kanssa?" *Eteenpäin*, 2.10.1934; "Browder tervehtii yhteisrintamaa sotaa ja fascismia vastaan." *Eteenpäin*, 4.10.1934; G. Bosse: "Yhteisrintama Yhdysvalloissa." *Eteenpäin*, 19.10.1934; "Yhteisrintama – työväenluokan polttavin kysymys." *Eteenpäin*, 18.11.1934. On editorials, see, for example, "Sosialistipuolueen jäsenet ja yhteisrintama." *Eteenpäin*, 4.10.1934; "Yhteisrintamatoiminnan huutava tarve." *Eteenpäin*, 4.11.1934; STJ: "S.T. Järjestön TPK:n päätöslauselmaehdotus." *Eteenpäin*, 15.9.1934; M[atti] Wick: "New Yorkin Suomalaisen Työväenyhdistyksen yhteisrintamatarjous sosialistipuolueen N.Y. suomalaiselle osastolle." *Eteenpäin*, 23.11.1934.

Eteenpäin and *Työmies*,[934] and these newspapers hailed its insightfulness.[935] The FWF secretary, Hans Johnson argued that Finnish American progressives, whether communist, socialist, Wobbly, or liberal, should forget their superficial disagreements and unite against fascism in Europe and America.[936] However, concrete co-operation between socialist and communist Finns remained very limited.[937]

Historians examining the effects of Popular Front politics on the interactions of European immigrants with other immigrants or non-white Americans have noted a certain ambivalence. In his study on Chicago Italians, Guglielmo states that the Italians' engagement with Popular Front politics and the CIO unions offered them complicated lessons in terms of race and color. On the one hand, the "culture of unity" pushed by the CP and CIO rhetoric and manifested in its truly interracial and interethnic organizational efforts drew Italians into closer co-operation with the city's other European immigrants and also with black workers. On the other hand, unionizers and party organizers could use national differences strategically in their organizing. They could also reinforce the color line in their rhetoric, and could inadvertently antagonize racial tensions. Moreover, the CIO's "culture of unity"

934 The first part of Dimitrov's speech was published in *Eteenpäin* on 30 August 1935. See Georgi Dimitrov: "Fasismin hyökkäys ja Kommunistisen Internationalen tehtävät taistelussa työväenluokan yhtenäisyyden puolesta fasismia vastaan." *Eteenpäin,* 30.8.1935.

935 "Yhteisvoimin fascismia murskaamaan – lausui Dimitrov." *Eteenpäin*, 6.8.1935; "Dimitrovin yhteenvedossa esitetään fascismin vastaisen taistelun ääriviivat." *Eteenpäin*, 16.8.1935.

936 Hans Johnson: "Miksi yhteisrintamaa ja yhteistoimintaa suomalaisten kesken tarvitaan." *Eteenpäin*, 17.9.1935; Hans Johnson: "Avoin kirje Sosialistipuolueen suomalaisille jäsenille." *Eteenpäin*, 22.9.1935. See also "Suomalaisen raatajaväen yhtenäisyys." *Eteenpäin*, 24.9.1935; [William] Lahtinen: "Suomalaisen väestön lippu liehumassa fasisminvastaisessa rintamassa." *Eteenpäin*, 26.9.1935.

937 Interview with Onni Kaartinen by Paul Buhle. 7 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

failed to convince everyone: opposition to mixed white-black socials, for example, remained strong among Italians.[938]

These contradictions were apparent also with Finns. After 1935, Finnish communists in the Midwest, New York and elsewhere became more involved in political campaigns that included people outside their ideologically – and often nationally – exclusive networks. The degree to which this took place was a matter of local context. In places where the Communist Party was almost exclusively Finnish, as was the case in some parts of rural Minnesota, for example, these contacts could be less. A communist from Superior, Wisconsin remembers the city's party activities in the late 1930s and the early 1940s in the following manner: "The Finns kept more to themselves because they didn't necessarily look for any, any other groups to join them as much as would have been welcome." But even in Superior, the interviewee notes, union activities in the Popular Front era brought Finnish communists into closer contact with "English-speakers."[939]

Indeed, union organizing was especially important in providing venues for interethnic contact. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, Finns had been active in the IWW and the left-wing unions of the Trade Union Unity League, but these organizations made little headway in the broader labor movement. The post-World War I crackdown on unionization also made union activities harder. After the Wagner Act, the establishment of the CIO and communists' changed policies on unionizing, communists – but also many non-communist leftists – became more actively engaged with union activities. Finnish communists became especially involved in the CIO's organizing efforts in Midwestern mining and lumber industries, both at the rank-and-file level and among the leadership.[940] This brought Finnish leftists into more intimate contact with other nationalities, but as Thomas Gugliel-

938 Guglielmo 2003, pp. 135–145.

939 Interview with Ernest Koski by Paul Buhle. 31 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

940 Kivisto 1984, p. 185.

mo has noted of the ambiguous racial politics of the "CIO experience,"[941] union activism could also encourage national pride rather than quell it. A Minnesota Finn told a WPA interviewer in 1938 that "The Finnish people are always devoted to the organizations that have their respect. They make reliable and dependable members of trade unions at all times. Not very often do you find a Finnish worker in the disgusting position of a 'Company Stooge.'"[942]

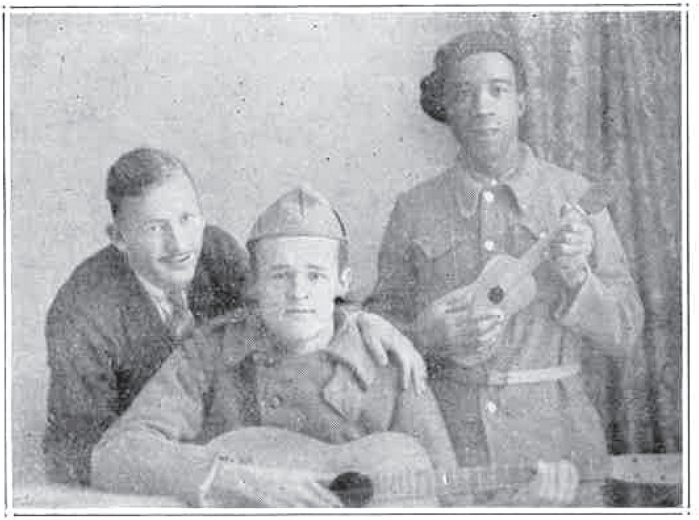
The Finnish-American response to the Spanish Civil War was similarly complicated in terms of national versus international identification. Like other American communists, they enthusiastically embraced the Republican side after 1936.[943] Seventy-eight Finnish Americans (and seventy-three Finnish Canadians) participated in the war as volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Among them, for example, was the *Eteenpäin* journalist Hjalmar Sankari and *Eteenpäin*'s business manager Aarne Mynttinen, who served as a political officer.[944] By fighting in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade these Finnish-American men fought in the first American military unit that was racially integrated and where black

941 Guglielmo 2003, pp. 136–137.

942 Interview with Signey Santabacka by Stanley Levine. 28 November 1938. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

943 Karni 1975, pp. 346, 376–378; Ahola 1980, pp. 256–258; Interview with Oiva Halonen by Paul Buhle. 28 February 1978. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University; Interview with Catherine Raisanen by Alfred Backman. 3 January 1939. Works Project Administration. Writers' Project Annals of Minnesota. Finns in Minnesota. Box 227. Minnesota Historical Society Archive, St. Paul.

944 On Finnish, Finnish-American and Finnish-Canadian volunteers in the International Brigades, see Jyrki Juusela: *Suomalaiset Espanjan sisällissodassa.* Atena: Jyväskylä 2003. For a list of Finnish-American volunteers, see Juusela 2003, pp. 417-418. On participants' accounts, see Knut E. Heikkinen (ed.): *Meidän poikamme Espanjassa.* Finnish Workers Federation: 1939; Jarno Pennanen: *Suomen pojat Espanjassa*. Hilkka Viitanen: Helsinki 1939.



Kansainvälistä prikaattia: virolainen, suomalainen ja neekeri.

Image 6: An image from a 1939 book commemorating the Finnish-American volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Mackenzie-Papineau Battallion. The caption reads: "From the International Brigades: an Estonian, a Finn and a Negro." Source: Knut E. Heikkinen: Meidän poikamme Espanjassa. Finnish Workers Federation: 1939, p. 179.

officers could command white soldiers (*Image 6*). Many Finns served, for example, in the brigade's machine gun regiment under the famous black commander Oliver Law.[945] Sankari, who was from Harlem, fought in the same unit as Milton Herndon, a black communist steelworker and the brother of Angelo Herndon, the famous Atlanta labor organizer. When Langston Hughes visited Spain in 1937 as a correspondent for *Baltimore Afro-American* and went to search for Herndon, he instead met with two of his

945 Heikkinen 1939, p. 29, 41, 44; Juusela 2003, pp. 176, 178, 190. On black American volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, see Robin D. G. Kelley: *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class.* The Free Press: New York 1996, pp. 123–158.

comrades, Sankari and Aaron Johnson. Hughes, who was fascinated by the cooperation between black and white soldiers on the battlefield, described this encounter in solemn terms in an article in *Baltimore Afro-American*: "Back in the candle-lighted tent, I saw that one was a colored boy, dark-brown skin, young – Johnson. And the other was a Scandinavian-American, blond, light-skinned, and strong. […] Two voices in the night, a colored voice and a white voice. Two American voices telling how Milton Herndon died." Sankari and Johnson recounted to Hughes how Herndon had died with a white comrade in battle, and how they had been buried side by side.[946]

Hughes's remarks on "a colored voice and a white voice" are an illustrative example of the way in which the Lincoln Brigade's ethos of white-black unity could reinforce Finnish whiteness. For the Harlem Renaissance author, the "blond, light-skinned" Sankari served as the polar opposite of the "dark-brown" Johnson. Sankari's national identification, whether Scandinavian or Finnish, was less relevant. Participation in the interracial volunteer force, and the political rhetoric in the U.S. communist press of white and black soldiers together fighting fascism, undoubtedly served to further strengthen the Finnish radicals' idea of their whiteness. The rhetoric of Finnish communists regarding the Abraham Lincoln Brigade also made much of the white-black unity, but often associated it with the broader diversity of the International Brigades. A Finnish Canadian volunteer touted the diversity of the International Brigades when he stated: "There were Jews and members of different Churches, black-skinned and white-skinned, radicals and conservatives."[947] The volunteers'

946 Langston Hughes: "Milt Herndon Died Trying to Rescue a Wounded Pal." In Christopher C. De Santi (ed.): *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes. Volume 9. Essays on Art, Race, Politics, and World Affairs.* University of Missouri Press: Columbia 2002, pp. 183–184. See also Brian Dolinar: *The Black Cultural Front: Black Writers and Artists of the Depression Generation.* University of Mississippi Press: Jackson 2012, pp. 94–95. Hjalmar Sankari himself was captured and executed by Franco's forces in 1938. See Juusela 2003, p. 442.

947 Heikkinen 1939, p. 6.

reminiscences of the war told of comradeship within a multinational mass of soldiers: Yugoslavs, Swedes, Cubans, black Americans, Czechoslovakians, Spaniards and so on.[948]

The Finnish communists' celebration of this plurality was coupled, however, with a strong emphasis on Finnish nationalist symbolism. This was encouraged by the structure of the International Brigades, in which different nationalities often formed their own military units. Finnish volunteers organized a separate machine gun company within the Canadian MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion, which they named *Jaakko Ilkka* after the leader of a medieval agrarian rebellion in Finland and a popular symbol of Finnish nationalism.[949] A 1939 book on Spain's Finnish-American volunteers is also a demonstrative example of how the rhetoric of Finnish nationalism was used in the celebration of the antifascist struggle. Entitled "Our Boys in Spain," the book celebrated the bravery, cool-headedness and ingenuity of the Finnish volunteers. It provides frequent examples of how non-Finnish brigadiers touted Finnish ardor in battle. The sacrifices made by the Finnish-American volunteers proved that there lived "in the people of Finnish descent an unquenchable thirst for freedom and a readiness to sacrifice all when necessary."[950] The coupling of an internationalist ethos with national symbolism was perfectly encapsulated in the Finnish volunteers' pride in the multinational appeal of the saunas that they built in different parts of Spain: "Without regard to nationality, everyone enjoyed our sauna […] Finns became famous among all nationalities because of their saunas."[951]

This use of nationalist imagery was not accidental, nor was it only a Finnish trait. The International Brigades' rhetoric was permeated with nationalistic imagery, which sought to invest patriotic pride into the antifascist struggle. The International Brigades

948 Heikkinen 1939.

949 Juusela 2003, p. 181.

950 Rogers 1939, p. 13.

951 Heikkinen 1939, p. 142.

were organized in divisions that had troops from predominantly the same nationalities. Some of these battalions were named after communist heroes, but most had names drawn from each nationality's national history: Americans had the Abraham Lincoln and George Washington battalions; Italians the Garibaldi Battalion; Poles had the Mickiewicz Battalion, and so on.[952] This harnessing of nationalist imagery to serve the antifascist cause was a reflection of the Popular Front line adopted at the Comintern's 1935 Congress. It affected not only the ways in which communists did politics, but also the symbolism they used to justify their antifascist coalition-building. The Comintern's urge to harness nationalist and patriotic symbols for communist use had a profound effect on how Finnish communists in the United States started to talk about Finnishness and Finnish-Americanness in the late 1930s. This was a time when Finnish Americans in general became increasingly invested in discussions of ancestry and history. Engaging full-on with these discussions in the late 1930s, communists sought to make Finnish-American ancestry an unlikely weapon in its antifascist struggle.

5.3. Popular Front Patriotism and the Politics of Ancestry

The rise of Nazism in Germany and fascism elsewhere in Europe, including Finland,[953] presented a grave challenge to Marxist ideas regarding human development. Whereas the belief in a nationality's ability to change was at the center of Marxist-Leninist understanding of historical development, the Nazis countered these notions by insisting on inherent inequality between the races. Most troublingly for the Soviet Union, and for Finnish and other Eastern European communists, Nazi theories consigned peoples living in Soviet land to be incapable of development:

952 Juusela 2003, p. 181; Hugh Thomas: *The Spanish Civil War.* Penguin Books: Harmondsworth 2001, p. 1035.

953 Oula Silvennoinen, Marko Tikka & Aapo Roselius: *Suomalaiset fasistit. Mustan sarastuksen airuet.* WSOY: Helsinki 2016.

Slavs, Jews, Baltic peoples, Tatars, Finns, and so on. This challenge to Marxist developmental optimism resulted in a sustained ideological assault by Soviet ethnographers on Nazi racial biology.[954] This ideological campaign was also taken up in the Finnish-American communist press, where the Nazi belief in the inherent supremacy of the Aryan race was frequently challenged and ridiculed. Most often, the communist press attacked the conservative Finnish-American *New Yorkin Uutiset* newspaper, which it accused of being anti-Semitic and apologists for Hitler.[955]

Yet, as Dimitrov had insisted in 1935, the challenge to fascism also required the "acclimatization" of internationalism and antifascism. Dimitrov's speech at the 1935 Comintern Congress on the importance of national histories in the communist antifascist struggle came at an opportune time for Finnish-American communists. The change in Communist Party strategy occurred at a time when the Finnish-American press and community activists were engaged in a debate on Finnish-American history. The year 1938 was fast approaching and with it the tercentenary of the establishment of New Sweden, the short-lived Swedish colony on the Delaware River. Swedish Americans had celebrated the colony's anniversary since the late nineteenth century as a means of recognizing the beginning of a Swedish presence in America. In a nativist climate, the celebrations had served to distance Swedes from other newly-arrived immigrants and to construe an image of a continuous Swedish presence in America from colonial times

954 Hirsch 2005, pp. 247–252. See also Martin 2001.

955 See, for example, "Fascistilehden totuudenrakkaus." *Eteenpäin*, 21.3.1933; "New Yorkin Uutiset lietsoo juutalaisvihaa." *Eteenpäin*, 23.4.1933. In 1934, the humor magazine *Punikki*, for example, published a cartoon where it ridiculed Nazi racial theories. The image featured "a fascist professor" who tried to prove the existence of an Aryan race by pointing with a stick to an image of Hitler—a short dark-complexioned man—and a much larger blond Nazi thug. Despite this obvious somatic difference, the "fascist professor" insisted that the "racial resemblance" between these two "Aryans" was obvious. The cartoon was coupled with a quotation from the Soviet politician Maxim Litvinov, where he criticized race as a purely political concept. See "Rotu-yhtäläisyyttä." *Punikki*, 15.3.1934.

to the present.[956] By the 1930s, Finnish Americans had started to use the history of the Delaware colony in a similar way, that is, as a "homemaking myth," to use Orm Overland's expression.[957] Finland had been part of the Swedish realm in the seventeenth century and since some of the Delaware settlers had been Finnish-speakers (as well as Swedish-speakers from the area that was to become Finland), the 1638 settlement was also seen as marking the beginning of a Finnish presence in America.[958]

In the mid-1930s, a debate began in the Finnish-American press about Finnish participation in the 1938 tercentenary celebrations. The anniversary had been planned in Sweden and the United States since the 1920s, but Finland and Finnish-American organizations had not participated. The Swedish-language Finnish immigrant press, in particular, argued that Finnish Americans should participate in the tercentenary celebrations, since it would strengthen the Nordic bond between the two peoples.[959] Many liberal Finnish-speaking Americans supported the idea, as it would associate Finns more firmly with Scandinavians and distance Finns from East Europeans. There was strong opposition among the more conservative sections of the immigrant community, however, towards celebrating with Sweden or Swedish Americans. Critics feared that Swedes would overshadow Finns in any joint tercentenary celebrations. Instead, they hoped that Finnish Americans would be able to organize their own tercentenary celebration in 1941 in order to mark the arrival of the first Finnish-speaking settlers in the Delaware colony. These conservative arguments drew on the rhetoric of linguistic strife in con-

956 Dag Blanck: "History at Work: The 1888 New Sweden Jubilee," *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1988, pp. 5–20.

957 Hjorthén 2015, p. 123.

958 See, for example, Salomon Ilmonen: *Amerikan ensimäiset suomalaiset eli Delawaren siirtokunnan historia*. Suomalais-luteerilainen kustannusliike: Hancock 1916; Salomon Ilmonen: *Amerikan suomalaisten historiaa 1*. Hancock 1919; E.A. Louhi: *The Delaware Finns or The First Permanent Settlement in Pennsylvania, Delaware, West New Jersey, and Eastern Part of Maryland.* Humanity Press: New York 1925.

959 "Delaware-jubileet och finländarna." *Finska Amerikanaren*, 18.7.1935.

temporary Finland, with Swedes represented as being the historical oppressors of Finnish-speaking Finns.[960] These arguments reflected a broader divide within the immigrant community: while some hoped to associate Finns more intimately with Nordic immigrants, others wished to maintain a more separate existence.

Until Comintern's Seventh Congress in August 1935, Finnish communists had little to say about this emerging debate on history. If the Third Period line had continued, they would have probably derided the tercentenary with the same vigor they had denigrated, for example, the Finnish-American enthusiasm for Finnish athletes at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics.[961] Yet, the planning for the tercentenary celebrations began at a time when the communists turned towards antifascist coalition building. Hence, they saw the Delaware jubilee as an opportunity to unite the progressive forces among Finnish Americans around a common cause. Moreover, the celebration of Finnish-American history allowed them to follow Dimitrov's instructions in the ideological battle against fascism: to fight reactionary depictions of history by constructing revolutionary counter-narratives that stressed the working class's role in a nation's history. Dimitrov had argued in Moscow that communists should not leave historical narratives of a nation's past to fascist historians; rather, they should actively seek to appeal to workers' natural national sentiments by showing how communists fought for the best traditions in the nation's history.[962]

U.S. communists took Dimitrov's instructions to heart and embraced symbols of American patriotism. American communists had used references to 1776 in their political rhetoric throughout

960 Salomon Ilmonen: "Delawaren siirtokunnan 300-vuosijuhla." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 6.2.1936.

961 See, for example, "Lahtaripropagandaa 'olympialaisten' nimellä." *Eteenpäin*, 13.7.1932; Iskuri: "Kansallisen vihan, eristyneisyyden ja imperialistisen sodan valmistelun olympialaiset." *Eteenpäin*, 27.7.1932; "Lahtareiden urheilijan kipeä kantapää huolestuttaa Raivaajaa ja Industrialistia enemmän kuin työttömäin työläisten tyhjä vatsa." *Eteenpäin*, 28.7.1932.

962 Dimitrov 1972.

the 1920s and especially the early 1930s, but during the Popular Front era the emphasis changed from the celebration of revolutionary traditions to a broader embrace of the "bourgeois" and patriotic traditions of the United States. The communist pantheon of Marx, Lenin and Stalin grew to include Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, as well as cultural figures, such as Walt Whitman and Mark Twain. The party leadership urged that commemorative events be politically utilized: the party started to celebrate the birthday of George Washington and in September 1937 it had its own "Thomas Paine Day," marking the 150th anniversary of the Constitution. In its commentary on the Spanish Civil War, the party likened Spain's Republicans to American Revolutionaries and equated Franco's fascists with eighteenth-century Tories. As noted above, the CPUSA-organized volunteer force in Spain was known as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The idea that communism represented the continuity of America's own democratic traditions culminated in Earl Browder's famous slogan "Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century."[963] In its May Day editions, the *Daily Worker* started to emphasize the American roots of the labor celebration[964] and it also published a special issue on the Fourth of July, featuring articles on socialism and American patriotism. A headline in the *Daily Worker*'s Fourth of July edition in 1938 proclaimed: "With the Spirit of 1776 Let Us Unite to Defeat the Tories of 1938." Below it was an image of a multiracial crowd in the attire of the Revolutionary War.[965]

The task of writing a radical and antifascist history of the Delaware Finns was accepted by the communist humor magazine, *Punikki*, which had viciously lampooned the non-communist Finnish Left throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but now promised to work in favor of a broader working-class coalition.[966] In Octo-

963 Ottanelli 1991, pp. 122–124.

964 See, for example, Art Shields: "America – The Birthplace of Mayday." *Daily Worker*, 30.4.1938.

965 "With the Spirit of 1776 Let Us Unite to Defeat the Tories of 1938." *Daily Worker*, 4.7.1938.

966 "Punikin uusille ja vanhoille lukijoille." *Punikki*, 1.10.1935.

ber 1935, the bimonthly magazine's editor and cartoonist Kaarle A. Suvanto, under the pen name "Toveri Tossu," outlined in an editorial how his paper would respond to Dimitrov's call to fight fascism with history. He recounted a conversation he had had in New York with a Hungarian about the common origins of Finns and Hungarians. How strange it was, Suvanto reflected, that representatives of two peoples who had been separated from each other on the Asian steppes eons ago were now reunited at a New York restaurant? Suvanto insisted that Finnish-American revolutionaries should take heed of Dimitrov's words and start to pay more attention to questions of national origin. This was all the more imperative considering that Finnish-American history had until now only been written from a bourgeois and downright fascist point of view. To counter this fascist historiography, Suvanto declared that his paper would increase its focus on "linguistic, historical, and all kinds of ancestry affairs" by sponsoring a special "ancestry commission" that would research Finnish-American history from a "factual basis" and that would regularly report on its findings to the magazine's readership. To avoid any nationalistic parochialism, the commission would include a non-Finnish member, Windrose Davis, who would make sure the commission did not develop any "segregationist thoughts" and that its perspective on history stayed attentive to Finnish Americans' historical connections to other nationalities.[967] Throughout the fall of 1935, *Punikki* published articles on the history of Finnish settlers in Delaware. True to the paper's genre, the articles were written with a humorous touch, but they had a solid ideological commitment at heart: to construct a Finnish-American past that would suit the contemporary imperatives of the antifascist Popular Front.

The ancestry commission routinely mocked both Finnish and Swedish "nationalist zealots," who constantly competed to claim credit for the Delaware settlement. *Punikki* writers emphasized

967 Toveri Tossu: "Suomalaisten sukujuuret". *Punikki* 1.10.1935; Toveri Tossu: "Punikki on alottanut ennenkuulumattoman laajat historiatutkimukset." *Punikki*, 1.10.1935.

the united struggle of the poor Swedish and Finnish settlers against the "Hitleresque" colonial administration of Governor Printz. They particularly focused on a 1653 rebellion of the colonists against the authorities. Here, the writers found the origins of the antifascist Popular Front strategy: Swedish and Finnish toilers had formed an "international" front against the proto-fascist colonial establishment. The point was brought home in a cartoon that depicted a group of Delaware colonists plotting the rebellion. The caption read: "A Popular Front meeting in 1653" (*Image 7*).[968] The paper also drew other connections between the past and present. They depicted the early Finnish colonists in North America as "deportees," who had risen against their oppressors in Sweden and Finland and had subsequently been exiled to America. The implications of the analogy were brought home without much subtlety: "Deportation is, then, nothing extraordinary to the Finnish migrant folk, but Finnish toilers have faced deportation already in these older times because they have wanted to work and to hold on to the spoils from that work. The same reason is behind the deportations even today."[969]

This turn towards ancestry had some troubling implications for radical anti-chauvinist and anti-nativist politics. The preoccupation with ancestral ties served to legitimate the idea of an unmalleable national essence; it risked conforming to the nativist narrative that saw "roots" or "blood ties" as grounds for legitimate political belonging to the American nation. What is more, its tendency to promote celebratory narratives of progression threatened to erase the colonial context of the early "Finnish" presence in North America. These pitfalls were already present in *Punikki*'s early examinations of Finnish Delaware, but in 1935 the Popular Front's nationalistic ethos was still mitigated by a degree of Third Period militancy. The *Punikki* writers, for example, attacked the "strange linguistic theories and historical follies" that had been

968 Toveri Tossu: "Yhteisrintaman alkujuuri Amerikan suomalaisten keskuudessa." *Punikki*, 2.11.1935.

969 Toveri Tossu: "Espanjan kärpäset ja Clementin mylly. Sukujuurikomitean tiedotuksia". *Punikki*, 15.10.1935.

Image 7: The communists used the history of Delaware to create historical continuities for the Popular Front's internationalist nationalism. The co-operation of poor Finnish and Swedish settlers in the seventeenth-century colony was seen as a precursor to the internationalist antifascism of the 1930s. The caption reads: "A Popular Front meeting in 1653." Source: Punikki, 2.11.1935.

put forward by bourgeois Finnish and Finnish-American historians to prove the greatness of ancient Finns. E. A. Louhi's *The Delaware Finns* was constantly lampooned as the worst example of this kind of embarrassingly eccentric and chauvinistic history writing, which projected contemporary fascist notions about Finnish racial superiority into the ancient past. If Finns were indeed such an ancient civilization, the *Punikki* writers quipped, it would put them to shame rather than emphasize their superiority: that such an old and civilized people was yet to develop socialism outside Karelia was a grave embarrassment. The Soviet Union, after all, had developed socialism in only 18 years.[970]

Punikki's "ancestry commission" also ridiculed the politicized use of ancestral claims. They noted that when the Finnish bourgeoisie had wanted to showcase its belonging to "Western civilization," it had vigorously rebutted the theory that Finns were of Mongol race. Now that Japan was ruled by anti-Soviet fascists, however, it had become fashionable to discuss similarities between the Finnish and Japanese languages.[971] *Punikki*'s discussion of the colonial context of the Delaware settlement also avoided the worst of celebratory complacency. They repeated the well-worn narrative about the uniquely good relations between the Finnish and Swedish settlers and their Native American neighbors, but also discussed the colonial exploitation and mass extinction of the latter group, comparing it to Mussolini's contemporary war on Abyssinia.[972] As communist Finns became more intimately involved with the actual planning of the Delaware tercentenary, and as the Popular Front policy assumed an ever more nationalistic and consciously non-radical ethos in the U.S. Communist Party,

970 Toveri Tossu: "Punikki on alottanut ennenkuulumattoman laajat historiatutkimukset." *Punikki*, 1.10.1935; Toveri Tossu: "Kun saavuttiin kaukaiselle rannalle eli marraskuun 7:s päivä v. 1917 ja marraskuun 7:s päivä v. 1641. *Punikki*, 1.11.1935.

971 "Lisäainehistoksi." *Punikki*, 15.11.1935. See also "Keksmannin näkökohta." *Punikki*, 1.12.1935; "Kirje Keksmannilta." *Punikki*, 15.1.1936.

972 "'Tierras de Ningun Provecho' ja Mestari Louhen päänahka." *Punikki*, 1.12.1935.

their criticism of the "fascist" misuse of ancestral claims became more muted and their subscription to Finnish and American nationalism more explicit.

5.4. The Antifascist Anniversary: The Delaware Tercentenary of 1938

In early 1937, it became clear that Finland and Finnish Americans would participate in the official tercentenary celebration organized by the U.S. government and the states of Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Finnish Ambassador in Washington, D.C., Eero Järnefelt, and a group of prominent Finnish-American professors and political operatives lobbied hard for Finland to be included in the official celebrations.[973] The U.S. Congress approved Finnish participation by pointing to Finland's good reputation as a debtor. Due to its eccentrically austere approach to state finance, Finland had been the only country to pay its state debt in full to the United States in the interwar period, a fact widely lauded in the press in the U. S. in the 1930s. Thus, albeit with some Swedish-American chagrin, the American Finnish Delaware Tercentenary Committee became involved in the planning, while the Government of Finland was invited to send an official delegation to the 1938 jubilee. State planning committees were established throughout the country in 1937 in order to plan for local commemorative events.[974]

973 Max Engman: "Dragkampen om Nya Sverige 1938." *Historisk Tidskrift*, Vol. 111, No. 2, 1991, pp. 197–198.

974 For a detailed account of the back-and-forth between the different actors in the planning of the tercentenary celebrations, see Engman 1991. On Finnish participation in the Delaware jubilee, see Melvin Holli: "1938 Delaware Tercentenary: Establishing a Finnish Presence at the 300th Anniversary Celebration." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finnish Identity in America.* The Turku Historical Archives 46: Turku 1990, pp. 33–47; Auvo Kostiainen: "Delaware as a Symbol of Finnish Immigration." In Auvo Kostiainen (ed.): *Finnish Identity in America.* The Turku Historical Archives 46: Turku 1990, pp. 49–70.

The Finnish-American discussions on the tercentenary were marked by rhetoric of inclusivity: the celebration would for the first time unify the politically and linguistically divided immigrant community. While this inclusive spirit was time and again strained by disagreements on political and linguistic issues, the tercentenary planning did bring a part of the Finnish-American Left into closer co-operation with conservative, religious and liberal Finnish-Americans than ever before. Both the Finnish Socialist Federation and the Finnish Workers' Federation urged their members to take an active part in the planning committees. Furthermore, the socialist and communist press enthusiastically covered the progress of the planning, and workers' halls organized Delaware-themed fund-raising events. A journalist for the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset* contentedly remarked that the communists in Harlem had even removed the "Asiatic face of Stalin" from the walls of their hall and replaced it with patriotic insignia, after he visited a tercentenary event organized at the venue in March 1938.[975]

The journalist's reference to Stalin's "Asiatic" features was no isolated utterance; imagery of race was very much part of the Finnish-American tercentenary rhetoric. In his discussion on historical representations that circulated during the planning and performance of the New Sweden tercentenary, Adam Hjorthén has noted how biological metaphors of the racial family had wide currency among Swedish and Swedish-American actors. These metaphors tied Swedish Americans to the dominant white race in the US and made the cordial connections between Swedes and white Americans seem family-like and thus natural. As Hjorthén notes, Swedes and Swedish Americans could make more use of this metaphor of nation-as-family than many other groups in the United States: they enjoyed a relatively privileged position in U.S. racial hierarchies, as representatives of the revered Nordic race *par excellence*. They were also untainted by the "foreign" ideo-

975 Dixi: "Delaware-mainosiltama." *New Yorkin Uutiset,* 15.3.1938.

logical imprints of communism or fascism, which had rendered some other ethnic and immigrant groups politically suspect.[976]

The Finnish position in racial classifications had been historically more ambiguous: many racial theorists remained on the fence about their Europeanness. They were also connected to political radicalism and communism, especially in the Upper Midwest. Anxieties about the racial ambiguity of Finns were also explicitly voiced in some comments during the newspaper discussions that preceded the tercentenary. One letter writer in a Minnesotan Finnish-American newspaper feared that American ideas about Finns as non-whites might make Americans dismissive of Finnish contributions to American colonial history. "I have a little suspicion that our classification as Mongols has something to do with the fact that we are not mentioned as settlers of Delaware in American school textbooks. Since the 'Yankee' is so sensitive over his race, it might be that they don't want to give credit to a 'colored' race."[977] Another writer insisted that the Delaware jubilee should be used to shred these doubts once and for all: "The Mongolian question is self-evident for us. Let us make it self-evident for the ignorant as well."[978]

Immigrant activists quickly understood that the 1938 jubilee would be a unique opportunity to improve the image of Finland and Finns in the United States. Some, especially in the Swedish-language immigrant press, hoped that the tercentenary would associate Finnish Americans more closely with Swedes and thus improve the standing of Finns by association. They hoped to connect Finnish ancestry with Nordic blood lines. Others, especially in the conservative Finnish-language press, wished that the jubilee would improve the image of Finnish ancestry on its own terms. They hoped to elevate Finnish blood onto an equal footing with other white West European nationalities. John Saari, a New York lawyer and a member of the American Finnish Delaware

976 Hjorthén 2015, p. 178. See also Blanck 2014.

977 John Manni: "Delaware-juhla ja koulukirjat," *Minnesotan uutiset* 20.1.1938.

978 Elina Kettunen: "Pienet ihmiset suurissa asioissa," *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 27.1.1938.

Tercentenary Committee, noted that the celebration would have immense effects on the self-confidence of Finns in America. He lamented how Finns in America were too often denigrated as foreigners by "boastful and patriotic" Americans, making young Finnish Americans, in particular, ashamed of their ancestry. Yet, Saari noted, there had been nothing that Finnish Americans could have said in their defense: the English had been the ones who had colonized the country and their descendants had been the ones who had founded the great Republic. Saari argued that it was only with the realization that Finns had also been involved in the colonization of North America, that it would be realized that they been dealt a trump card in the debate against the nativists:

> We know now that the blood of our people has flown in the veins of the American people since the dawn of the countrys [sic] civilization; that the roots of the Finnish people penetrate to the deepest strata of the American soil and, therefore, our anchorage is secure; and that our historical background in America is unbroken, running back as far as the early colonial period. We can now read and study the history of our country with the same exultation, the same spirit and feeling of pride of belonging as any other people; for we know that the history of this country is, in part, the history of our own people, and that we are no more foreigners than any of the other people that make up this great nation. This is the meaning of the Delaware Tercentenary Celebration to Finnish Americans.[979]

When Saari referred to "the other people that make up this great nation," he had a rather specific subsection of the American populace in mind: the white Anglo-Saxon nationalities who could trace their ancestry back to the earliest Europeans in North America. That Finns could be associated with this racially exclusive subsection was one of the greatest achievements of the tercentenary celebrations. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's open

979 John Saari: "The Meaning of the Delaware Tercentenary Celebration to Finnish Americans," *Lännen Suometar,* 30.11.1937; *Norden* 9.12.1937.

letter to the Finnish Foreign Minister, Rudolf Holsti, the head of the Finnish delegation at the 1938 jubilee, was widely circulated in the Finnish-American press. Roosevelt noted: "We have reason to be proud of our citizens of Finnish origin." Industrious, stable and resourceful Finns had been an important component of "the American nationality" from its earliest stages, the President extolled.[980] Addressing a Finnish-American dinner party in Philadelphia on 30 June 1938, Holsti reflected on the changed image of Finns in the United States: "Finns are no longer treated in this great land like some inferior race, as was still the case less than a decade ago." Holsti drew on personal experience when uttering this remark. When visiting Stanford University with his wife in the early 1930s, U.S. immigration officers had referred to Finns as a "less desirable nationality." Now, less than a decade later, such a slight appeared unthinkable. Holsti reflected that "Today we are not in such an excluded position, thank God."[981] Some felt less secure, however. After the tercentenary celebrations, a writer in an Astoria paper lamented that a "Finnish Gypsy" – a probable reference to the dark-complexioned leftist Elis Sulkanen, who spoke at the jubilee – had been allowed to represent Finland and Finnish Americans.[982]

The leftist press's approach to this rhetoric of ancestry, blood and race was fraught with tension. Like the conservative press, the socialist *Raivaaja* and the communist *Eteenpäin* and *Työmies* touted the Delaware tercentenary's purportedly anti-nativist implications: finally, the long-maligned Finnish immigrants could prove their worth to the contemptuous Americans. A *Raivaaja* editorial noted that the tercentenary would show native-born

980 "10,000 personer övervar avtäckningen av monumentet i Chester" *Norden*, 7.7.1938; "Presid. Rooseveltin persoonallinen tervehdyssanoma suomalaisille," *Amerikan Suometar,* 2.7.1938; "Presidentti Roosevelt tervehtii ja onnittelee suomalaisia", *Viikkolehti* 30.6.1938.

981 "Ministeri Holstin puhe Amerikan suomalaisille Philadelphiassa." *New Yorkin Uutiset* 7.7.1938.

982 "Vieläkin Delaware-historiasta." *Lännen Suometar*, 6.9.1938. Whether Sulkanen was of Roma background is uncertain.

Americans "that the land where we come from is a civilized country and that our compatriots, few in number as they might have been, were among the first white-skinned settlers of these shores."[983] The communist press shared these hopes. In an April 1938 editorial, *Eteenpäin* noted that the tercentenary would restore Finns to their rightful place in American history, and make Finnish participation in the American working-class's struggle even more legitimate in the eyes of "the broad American masses." It would also bring to an end the ill-spirited insinuations of foreignness that had been hurled at Finnish workers during earlier labor struggles. The editors noted that "If the Delaware tercentenary celebrations succeed in convincing the American people that the roots of Finnish nationality reach back to the earliest population history of America, then the organization of the festivities has been worth all the effort from the perspective of the workers."[984] Another *Eteenpäin* writer commented on how "We can now all say that we are not some people who just showed up here on the Allan Line. So when some old geezer who hates foreigners next time says that Finns should be pushed back to where they came from, we can note that our roots in this country go as deep as anyone else's. […] And with this trump card we require that our reputation as builders of this country be recognized."[985]

The notion that belonging to America was dependent on racial ancestry had some troubling implications for the purportedly internationalist socialists. If Finns could lay claim to Americanness through their supposedly ancient roots in the soil, what about those immigrants who could not make such claims? Thus, leftist attempts at investing the Delaware tercentenary with an anti-nativist message suffered from a compromising particularism: it was hoped that the history of Finnish Delaware would serve as a

983 "Historiallinen juhla." *Raivaaja*, 11.12.1937.

984 "Eivät Delaware-juhlat estä taistelua parempien olojen puolesta," *Eteenpäin*, 5.4.1938.

985 Ville: "Ne suomalaiset jotka eivät tulleet Allan-linjalla Amerikkaan." *Eteenpäin*, 2.2.1938.

trump card against anti-*Finnish* nativism, not against anti-immigrant nativism as such.

This logic was not accepted by all Finnish-American leftists. The Wobbly paper *Industrialisti* was openly critical of the "nationalistic" Delaware celebrations and refused to even print readers' letters that "boosted" the publicity of these commemorative events.[986] Some of the newspaper's criticism was aimed at the insufficient attention that was being paid to the class-conscious way Delaware Finns were being celebrated. One Wobbly writer retorted that the memory of these poor toilers should be marked with the *Internationale*, not with bourgeois and religious insignia of Finnish nationalism.[987] But the editors of the IWW organ also criticized the core ideas used by communists and socialists to mark the anniversary. They noted the troublesome implications inherent in the notion that Finnish Americans "earned" their right to belong in America by reference to the Delaware colony. In a February 1938 editorial, entitled "By What Right Are Finns in America," *Industrialisti* challenged both the practical worth and the moral legitimacy of the idea that the Delaware celebration would help Finnish workers to fight nativism. In practical terms, the idea that a single celebration of colonial-era Finns would help the struggles of contemporary Finnish-American workers was embarrassingly detached from reality. How many Italian radicals had been saved from deportation by Columbus Day celebrations, the paper queried.[988]

The idea that ancestry equaled legitimate belonging also troubled Wobblies on moral grounds. It went against the earlier conviction of Finnish-American radicals that Finnish workers – like workers of all nationalities – could claim that they belonged in

986 De Bunker: "Sana meiltäkin paljon puhuttuun asiaan." *Industrialisti*, 31.3.1938.

987 K.H.: "Sananen juhlista." *Industrialisti*, 11.6.1938. See also V.L.K.: "Suomalainen yhteisrintamaliike." *Industrialisti*, 11.5.1938; "Suomalaisten siirtymisestä Delawareen." *Industrialisti*, 6.6.1938.

988 "Millä oikeudella ovat suomalaiset Amerikassa." *Industrialisti*, 5.2.1938. See also "Siinä olisi kokeilutilaisuus." *Industrialisti*, 13.6.1938.

America through their own labor contributions. The editors queried "Should we now discard this sound claim, and replace it with a story of how a few Finns were transported here […] from Sweden three hundred years ago? Would it not be safer that we stick to our own merits, rather than to those of our ancestors, when legitimizing our belonging in this country?"[989] The purportedly class-conscious communists had conceded a key point to nativist capitalists in their rhetoric: that newly-arrived immigrants with no purported ancestral ties to the country were in no position to make political or economic demands.[990]

The Wobblies also accused the communists of abandoning their class-based politics for an uncritical celebration of bourgeois nationalism. These claims were based on the IWW Finns' well-established criticism of the insufficiently class-based politics of the communists. Throughout the 1930s, the Wobblies had accused the communists of putting race before class.[991] The Popular Front policies had only intensified this line of criticism: now it was also nationality that trumped class in the communist imagination. Faced with a diminishing Finnish-speaking working-class population, the communists had decided to orient towards non-class conscious Finns, instead of associating themselves on a class basis with workers' movements of other nationalities.[992] The Wobbly writers criticized the Delaware tercentenary for inflating the significance of the small band of seventeenth-century Finnish settlers, who played no discernable role in American history, other than their Finnishness, which should be insignificant to everyone aside from nationalists. The Wobblies warned that the abandonment of class politics and the uncritical embrace of nationalist

989 "Millä oikeudella ovat suomalaiset Amerikassa." *Industrialisti*, 5.2.1938.

990 "Epäpätevää perustelua." *Industrialisti*, 14.4.1938. See also "Puhukaa vain omasta puolestanne." *Industrialisti*, 16.2.1938; De Bunker: "Sana meiltäkin paljon puhuttuun asiaan." *Industrialisti*, 31.3.1938.

991 See also "Rotukysymys ja 'edistysmielisyys.'" *Industrialisti*, 21.3.1938; "Rotuviha." *Industrialisti*, 26.3.1938.

992 "Kansallisuus vai luokka." *Industrialisti*, 30.3.1938; "Yksi syy suomalaisuuden herätysyritykseen." *Industrialisti*, 16.5.1938.

zealotry threatened to push the communist workers' movement in a dangerous direction.[993]

Countering these Wobbly criticisms, the communist press and leadership maintained they could make a distinction between the purportedly benevolent, progressive patriotism of the Delaware tercentenary and the uglier zealotry of national and racial chauvinism. In January 1938, a Finnish Workers' Federation leader, Carl Päiviö, explained in a speech at Harlem's workers' hall that it was to monitor that this distinction was enforced that legitimated communist participation in the Delaware tercentenary's planning. Päiviö held that by their presence in the planning committees, communists had ensured that the celebration would not get mired in anti-Swedish chauvinism.[994] The linguistic issue was frequently broached by the conservative *New Yorkin Uutiset*, which throughout the spring of 1938 published articles and readers' letters that bemoaned the purportedly inflated role of Sweden and the Swedish language in the planning of the Finnish tercentenary.[995] The discourse drew on contemporary linguistic strife in Finland, where the University of Helsinki was in the midst of a conflict between its Finnish and Swedish-speaking students.[996] The communist press severely criticized this "anti-Swedish chauvinism" among reactionary Finnish Americans, and argued for a tercentenary jubilee that would celebrate the solidarity of

993 De Bunker: "Sana meiltäkin paljon puhuttuun asiaan," *Industrialisti*, 31.3.1938; John Korpi: "Puheen ja toiminnan aiheita Delawaren juhlijoille." *Industrialisti*, 21.4.1938; "'Päivänpolttavin kysymys." *Industrialisti*, 30.4.1938; V.L.K.: "Suomalainen yhteisrintamaliike." *Industrialisti*, 11.5.1938; "Mikä ketäkin hävettää." *Industrialisti*, 19.7.1938.

994 "Toveri Carl Päiviön puhe New Yorkin S.T.Y:n perhejuhlassa Työn Temppelissä tammikuun 2 päivä, 1938." *Eteenpäin*, 5.1.1938.

995 On the debates regarding the role of Swedish language and Sweden in the Finnish tercentenary celebration, see, for example, Sana: "Ruotsin värit suomalaisten Delaware-juhlamerkkinä," *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 28.2.1938; Amerikan suomalainen: "Delaware-juhlille saapuva Suomen edustus ruotsalaisella pohjalla," *NYU,* 29.3.1938; E.K. "Delaware Mietteitä!" *NYU*, 5.4.1938.

996 Meinander 2016, pp. 38–58.

Swedish and Finnish peoples.[997] The Finnish Workers Federation sought to invest a decidedly antifascist message in the tercentenary in line with its Popular Front commitments. In April 1938, it published a celebratory book about the Delaware colony's history, which carefully avoided any explicit hints to its ideological origin but ended in an appeal for unity among progressive antifascists.[998]

The socialist *Raivaaja* also sought to couple its celebration of Finnish-Americanism to more internationalist, anti-chauvinist sentiments. In an article published on the first page of *Raivaaja* in its special edition on Delaware, the editor-in-chief, Yrjö Mäkelä, put forward an interpretation of the jubilee as a celebration against intolerance and prejudice. He began by noting how every immigrant generation had faced suspicions from native-born citizens. First, it was the hatred of the Irish by the English and then prejudice against immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. While Mäkelä acknowledged that Finns often felt inferior towards native-born English-speakers, they also had their own prejudices. Anti-Jewishness was a particularly unbecoming feature within the labor movement and also among Finnish workers. He noted that "All is needed is a good Hitler to set this simmering antisemitism into full flames." Finns also felt a certain superiority towards other first-generation immigrants – French Canadians, Italians and Slavs – and regarded them as inferior. Mäkelä recounted the common prejudices among his working-class compatriots: "They are dirty, too noisy, and have characteristics and traits which we don't like." Only Germans and Scandinavians, who had arrived in America earlier and had risen in economic and social status, were respected by Finns. Mäkelä acknowledged that other immigrant groups probably harbored their own prejudices against

997 "Mihin kansallisuusvihan lietsominen johtaa?" *Eteenpäin*, 3.5.1938; "Hajottavaa esiintymistä." *Eteenpäin*, 7.1.1938; "Ruotsalaisen vähemmistökansallisuuden oikeudet Suomessa." *Eteenpäin*, 14.1.1938; Heiska: "'Kaunis asia'… 'Päivän polttavin kysymys.'" *Eteenpäin*, 4.5.1938; Heiska: "Suomalaisten ja ruotsalaisten Delaware-juhla." *Eteenpäin*, 14.5.1938.

998 *Delaware Albumi. Amerikaan saapuneet ensimmäiset suomalaiset siirtolaiset.* F-A Printing Corporation: New York 1938.

Finns. Finns also had their peculiar traits and customs; their insularity and unassailability, in particular, were looked down upon by others. Thus, while all the immigrant groups were divided in their suspicions of each other and while they were all despised by native-born Americans, they were all still united in how they "despised the Negroes." Mäkelä recounted a story of a Slovenian immigrant newspaper that had recommended that its readers vote against the Republicans, since they were the party that had "'freed' the Negroes."[999] There was, then, a certain hierarchy of prejudice that allowed immigrants to compensate for their own subservient positions by holding blacks in contempt.

According to Mäkelä, ignorance had caused this unfortunate state of affairs: "The different nationalities that belong to the unpropertied class simply do not understand one another." If the different nationalities and so-called Old Stock Americans could get to know each other better they would soon realize that "'they were made of the same clay'" and "that the vices we think the others possess and the virtues we imagine ourselves to have are not as common as we think they are." Overcoming these prejudices against immigrants and blacks was not only a moral imperative, but also an urgent social concern as the economic situation was becoming more austere and working-class unity was badly needed. However, immigrants were not only despised by native-born Americans, but also by their own children, the so-called second generation. Mäkelä produced a lengthy quote from a letter by a Lithuanian immigrant, which had been used as an exemplar of this immigrant predicament in Louis Adamic's *My America*. The Lithuanian immigrant bemoaned how his children had started to look down upon him and were embarrassed to bring their friends over from school: "They see me as inferior, as a foreigner, as a Bohunk." But while the children of immigrants sought to gain acceptance outside their home in this way, they would still be looked down upon by native-born citizens. The native-born American did not consider the children of immigrants to be part of the nation and it was this dismissive treatment that further fu-

999 Yrjö Mäkelä: "Ensimmäinen ja toinen sukupolvi." *Raivaaja*, 10.6.1938.

eled the second generation's contempt for their parents. Mäkelä was afraid that such contempt for one's parents and their culture might leave the second generation rootless and consequently less well-equipped to survive any nativist onslaught. When the older generation of immigrants faced contempt from native-born Americans, they could always fall back on their own culture and make fun of Americans from their own perspectives. But if such cultural support was lost, what was there for the second generation to fall back on? Mäkelä hoped that the Delaware celebration would be able to alleviate this problem, even if in a small way, by illustrating to the younger generation the magnificence of their ancestors' culture.[1000]

In its celebration of Finnish nationalism, the communist leadership and press needed to tread a careful line lest they drift off into more treacherous waters. The purportedly good and progressive kind of nationalism could easily morph into a more troublesome brand of national chauvinism. This was a plague the Finnish-American communists had sought to eradicate since the early 1930s.[1001] In April 1938, there was an importunate reminder of the potential danger of such a scenario. At a meeting of Brooklyn's co-operative bakery, an attendee read out an article from a handwritten newspaper (*nyrkkilehti*), which singled out Jewish businessmen for their greed and mocked them for their physical appearance. That a purportedly progressive co-op activist could sink to using such anti-Semitic chauvinism brought into relief the potential problems of the nationalist euphoria of the 1938 tercentenary. An *Eteenpäin* article on the incident remarked: "We Finns have no reason to disparage or oppress other nationalities. The fact that we are now asserting our historical rights in America through the Delaware jubilee should not make anyone think that we can now look down on other nationalities." The author of the article appealed to readers that they do their utmost in the struggle against "anti-Jewishness and the hatred in our ranks towards

1000 Yrjö Mäkelä: "Ensimmäinen ja toinen sukupolvi." *Raivaaja*, 10.6.1938.

1001 See Chapter 5.

other nationalities."[1002] A columnist in *Työmies* also condemned anti-Semitism and white chauvinism within the ranks of Finnish-American workers:

> Isn't it a common practice among Finns that we refer to a Jew whenever we want to describe a particularly untrustworthy, deceitful and a cunning person? It is a common understanding that Jews are swindling rascals (*petkuttavia veijareita*) and we completely forget the Jewish workers, Jewish history, Jewish geniuses like scientists, authors, doctors, musicians, etc. These kinds of opinions about Jews are uttered without us even noticing – without realizing that this is the most ugly kind of nationalism, the kind that breeds fascism and that is completely at odds not only with class consciousness but also with common decency.[1003]

It was certainly not wrong to commemorate Finnish ancestors in Delaware, the columnist held, but this should not distract from the need for anti-chauvinist vigilance. Anti-Semitic utterances – as well as jokes about black people, another lamentably common form of chauvinism among Finnish-American workers – should be seen as part of the same ideology that fueled fascism and Nazism.[1004]

Thus, the communist and socialist attempt to reconcile national pride with socialist internationalism was riddled with tensions. They insisted that the recognition of Finns as an original setter nation in North America was entirely in keeping with the principles of working-class solidarity towards all nationalities and races. Yet, the preoccupation to legitimate Finnish presence

1002 Heiska: "Juutalaisvastaisuudesta", *Eteenpäin*, 27.4.1938. The incident was also later condemned by the educational committee of the co-operative bakery – though without mentioning the anti-Semitic character of the attendee's "disgraceful" outburst. See "Brooklynin osuusleipomon valistuskomitean asioita," *Eteenpäin*, 5.5.1938.

1003 Aapo: "Anti-semitismistä." *Työmies*, 4.1938.

1004 Aapo: "Anti-semitismistä." *Työmies*, 4.1938. See also "Rotu- ja kansallisuusvihan lietsonta." *Eteenpäin*, 6.5.1938; "Juutalaisviha – 'sallimatonta ja häpeällistä.'" *Eteenpäin*, 24.6.1938.

in America with ancestral ties could not be detatched from its racially exclusivist implications. If national belonging was imagined through "blood ties," all nationalities and races without this consanguinity became less entitled to assert their rights in the country. It is important to note that this tension was not created by the Popular Front's insistence on patriotic and nationalist language. The communist strategies of antifascist nationalism did reinforce ideas about the linkage between consanguinity and group belonging, but this linkage had been part of Finnish-American leftist thinking from the early 1900s onwards. The exact nature and significance of this linkage was debated, and the terms used to describe it were varied (race, nation civilization and so on). Yet, its existence was rarely questioned, which points to the pervasiveness of racial thinking among the immigrant radicals. Both the pervasiveness and complexity of these thinking patterns is illustrated by considering Finnish-American relationship with Native Americans.

5.5. The Limits of the Red Melting Pot?

The Delaware tercentenary provided Finnish leftists with an opportunity to celebrate the historical roots of their working-class internationalism. Finnish and Swedish colonists, who struggled against the Swedish Crown, were depicted as precursors to modern-day workers battling fascism in an international front. Yet, one group was conspicuously absent from these celebrations of internationalist unity: the Lenape tribe which had inhabited the Delaware area with the Swedish and Finnish colonists in the 1600s. This absence of Native Americans from the celebration of internationalist working-class solidarity points to the limits of the Finnish-American Left's purportedly universalist thinking on human difference.

To be sure, the rhetoric used by the organizers of the Delaware tercentenary was filled with celebratory remarks about the uniquely cordial relationship between the seventeenth-century

Swedish and Finnish settlers and the Lenape Indians on the Delaware River. As Gunlög Fur, for example, has noted, this rhetoric reflected a sense of Nordic exceptionalism, whereby they were unique among Europeans in their non-complicity in colonial exploitation of non-European peoples.[1005] The Finnish Delaware celebrations also stressed the Finns' amicable relations with the indigenous Americans. In Connecticut, the Finnish-American celebration of the Delaware tercentenary was, for example, addressed by Chief Harold A. Tantaquidgeon, a local leader of the Mohawk Tribe, who stressed the age-old friendship between Finns and Native Americans. Chief Tantaquidgeon's speech was interesting in that it turned around the notion of Finns' uniquely friendly relationship with the Native Americans. It was the Native Americans, the chief remarked, who had been peaceful towards the small band of Nordic newcomers even though they had the power to crush them: "When you arrived on our shores, we were a powerful nation. Our tribe was some 90,000 members strong. We could have destroyed you, but instead we welcomed you as friends, we helped you and protected you."[1006]

Yet, this kind of "internationalist" solidarity of *Native Americans* towards the Nordic colonists was not acknowledged in the Finnish-American Left's Delaware rhetoric. When *Punikki* had initially started to write about Delaware's Finnish history, it had included criticism of the genocidal exploitation of the indigenous population by Europeans. However, they had stressed the good relations between Finns and the Lepate, which they viewed as being based on a shared appreciation of their oppressed status: just like the poor Finnish settlers, who had been oppressed by

1005 Fur 2004. See also Magdalena Naum & Jonas M. Nordin: "Introduction: Situating Scandinavian Colonialism" in M. Naum & J. M. Nordin (eds.) *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena* Springer Science+Business Media: New York 2013, pp. 10-12.

1006 "Intiaanien tervehdys suomalaisille." *Päivälehti*, 2.7.1938; "Hyvin onnistunut ja yleisörikas uudisraivaajien 2-päiväinen muistojuhla Brooklynissa, Conn." *New Yorkin Uutiset*, 21.6.1938; B.L.: "Valtavat Delaware-juhlat Brooklynissa, Conn." *Minnesotan Uutiset*, 25.6.1938.

the Swedish Crown, the Lenape had been oppressed by the more powerful Iroquois.[1007] During the year of the jubilee, the communists also referenced the uniquely cordial relations between the Finns and Lepate in their history book on the Delaware colony and in newspaper articles about the celebration (*Image 8*).[1008] However, the Finnish-Lenape relationship was not celebrated within the same framework as the Finnish-Swedish relationship. Co-operation between the Finns and the Swedes was seen as a precursor to latter-day working-class internationalism; relations between the Finns and the Lenape were not imagined from this working-class perspective.

These difficulties in imagining Native Americans as fellow workers reflected a more general thinking pattern. Discussion in the Finnish-American labor press about the "Indian question" never developed in the same way as had been the case vis-à-vis the Asian and Negro questions. This was largely because Native Americans were seen as inhabiting areas – and a time – outside industrial civilization. They were associated more with nature than with culture. Oskari Tokoi's memoirs provide an illustrative example. Tokoi, a Social Democratic politician in Finland who spent time in the United States around the turn of the century, recounts an encounter with a drunken Indian man when traveling in the Nevada desert in the mid-1890s. Tokoi is first hesitant to approach the drunken man, because he has heard bad stories about Indians and liquor. Tokoi noted that he had heard "that liquor makes the Indian furious and arouses his primordial hunter's instincts." He feared that this might bring to the fore "the savage that preys on white scalps," which still lived within the Indian, hiding behind the thin veneer of civilization.[1009] These ideas about

1007 Toveri Tossu & Simo Suomalainen: "Yhteisrintaman alkujuuri Amerikan suomalaisten keskuudessa. Sukujuurikomitean tiedotuksia." *Punikki*, 15.11.1935.

1008 *Delaware Albumi. Amerikaan saapuneet ensimmäiset suomalaiset siirtolaiset.* F-A Printing Corporation: New York 1938.

1009 Tokoi 1947, p. 74. Tokoi overcomes his fears, however, and spends the evening with the Native American man.

Image 8: The communist press celebrates the Delaware tercentenary. The caption reads: "The first Finnish immigrants arrive to Delaware in 1638." An image from the Communist newspaper Eteenpäin, celebrating the 1938 tercentenary of New Sweden. Notice the Finnish flag on the ship. Source: Eteenpäin, 26.6.1938.

savage Indians had become familiar to many Finnish immigrants already in Finland. Newspapers in Finland reported widely on ”Indian wars” in North America in the nineteenth century. Many of James Fenimore Cooper's novels were also published in Finland in the late nineteenth century, attracting interest in the American Indians. Indeed Hunnisett has observed that Finns ”seem to have internalized many of the negative features of the standard American stereotype” already in their home country.[1010]

Indeed, the Finnish radical press was not particularly interested in analyzing and changing their bygone mode of living. Asian and black workers, whatever their possible deficiencies, were still workers and could be imagined as being a part of the emergent industrial melting pot. In contrast, Native Americans, no matter how sympathetically they could be portrayed, could not as easily be imagined in a similar manner. Peter Vellon has noted that New York's Italian language press portrayed Native Americans as being outside the bounds of civilization and industrial society.[1011] The same was true of the Finnish language labor press to a great extent. Even as it (rather infrequently and briefly) criticized the federal government's poor treatment of Native American tribes,[1012] its predominate disposition was to remain silent on the issue. While it sympathized with the plight of Native Americans, it only very rarely discussed them in the context of industrial society.[1013] The headline of one article in *Eteenpäin* from 1935 was telling: “A Cry for Help from the Vanishing Indians.”[1014] While

1010 Hunnisett 1988, p. 32.

1011 Vellon 2017, pp. 58–59.

1012 See, for example, “Minnesotan intiaaneilta ryöstetään viimeisetkin elinehdot.” *Työmies*, 21.4.1915; “Intiaaneille pieniä almuja.” *Eteenpäin*, 23.1.1935.

1013 For a rare exception, see “Sosialismi ja intiaanit.” *Työmies*, 12.9.1914. This was a brief editorial about a Cherokee chief who had visited the office of *Appeal to Reason* and told of his tribe's commitment to socialism. The Cherokee were “so aware of societal issues that many white persons would be amazed,” the *Työmies* editorial reported.

1014 “Häviävien intiaanien hätähuuto.” *Eteenpäin*, 16.1.1935.

Native Americans could elicit sympathy, they were still a people of a bygone era, destined to disappear in an industrial society.

For many leftists, the socialist melting pot could only assimilate peoples that were sufficiently evolved. South Europeans, Asians and even blacks were, at least for most, all able to assimilate in this melting pot, even if the leftists disagreed on how quickly this process would take and what measures it required from the people who were more "progressed." Native Americans, more than any other group, however, were outside these debates on assimilability. This relative silence on Native Americans – perhaps even more than the ink they spilled on other national and racial groups – illustrates how evolutionary thinking conditioned the racial thinking of many Finnish-American radicals in the early twentieth century.

* * *

Yet, it is still important to note, that these evolutionary ideas were not an ideological straitjacket and that they coexisted with different kinds of understandings. When Matti Kurikka, the Finnish utopian socialist, had established his utopian society on the Malcolm Island in the early 1900s, he had insisted that Finns should treat local Native Americans with respect, because both peoples had their origins on the Asian steppes. These alternative ways to think about the difference between Finns and Native Americans never completely disappeared. In the Great Lakes region, it seems that many Finnish immigrants maintained beliefs about their shared values with the local Ojibwe.[1015] These relationships should not be romanticized. Some of the recent journalistic depictions of "Findians," the purported descendants of Finnish-Ojibwe relationships, are often problematic: they overlook, for example, the colonial context of the Finnish-Ojibwe en-

1015 Hunnisett 1988, pp. 23–24; Ronning 2003.

counter, reproduce an exoticized imagery of "Indians" and rely on essentialistic notions of culture.[1016]

Instead of romanticizing relationships between Finns and the Ojibwe, these relations should be historicized. Such an endeavor is not in the scope of this research, but I will point to one interesting direction that future research might address: blueberry trade in Minnesota and Michigan. By briefly examining this case, I will show that ideas about developmental differences between Finns and Native Americans (or indeed other peoples) should not be viewed as a straitjacket that conditioned all everyday interactions between these putative groups.

Blueberry picking was one of the most popular forms of seasonal labor in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century northern Minnesota and Michigan. It was also popular among Finnish immigrants and many other Midwesterners, but the Ojibwe had the most organized and large-scale blueberry-picking operation in the region. They had picked berries for centuries for medicine and food, but in the early 1900s blueberry picking became one of their most important sources of income as they started to sell berries to local, regional, and national markets.[1017] An Ojibwe woman wrote in an essay for the Chippewa Indian Historical Project in 1938 that "One of the leading industries of the Chippewa of Lake Superior is blueberry picking. [O]utside of the more

1016 The most recent example of this kind of representation of "Findians" is Katja Kettu, Meeri Koutaniemi & Maria Seppälä: *Fintiaanien mailla.* WSOY: Helsinki 2016. For a good review of the book, which examines many of its problems, see Jari Nikkola: "Fintiaanit journalistien mailla." Agricola Book Reviews, 10.11.2016. Available online http://agricola.utu.fi/julkaisut/kirja-arvostelut/index.php?id=4000. Finnish Sami activist Petra Laiti has also criticized Finnish media discussions on the "Findians." See Petra Laiti: "'Fintiaanit' – suomalaisille kelpaava alkuperäiskansa." Available online https://petralaiti.com/2016/08/11/fintiaanit-suomelle-kelpaava-alkuperaiskansa/.

1017 Chantal Norrgard: "From Berries to Orchards: Tracing the History of Berrying and Economic Transformation among Lake Superior Ojibwe." *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2009, pp. 33-61.

substantial industries, such as farming and lumbering, blueberry picking ranks first in point of dollars and cents."[1018]

Thus, as Finnish berry pickers descended on northern Minnesota and Michigan forests every year in late July or early August, they often came into contact with the much more organized and sophisticated berry-picking operations of the Ojibwe. After foraging, Finnish berry pickers could sell their harvest to Ojibwe buyers who would then sell it onwards to local, regional, and national markets. In some remote farming and mining locales situated near Ojibwe settlements, where dollars and cents were in short supply, blueberry trade with the Ojibwe seems to have been a major source of income for Finnish migrant families. A Finnish woman from New York Mills, Minnesota, who was interviewed by the WPA researchers in 1938, reminisced that "We picked [blueberries] and sold them to the Indians for cash. The Indians paid us a much higher price than the white man would pay." Local "white" storekeepers would not accept money from their customers as a medium of exchange, but would instead offer special tokens, which forced local Finns to shop at their stores. Thus, the blueberry trade with the Ojibwe was the only source of dollars for these New York Mills Finns: "We were very glad when the Indians bought our blueberries, because that was the only money that we saw all year." Reciprocally beneficial economic relationship between Finns and the Ojibwe eased social interaction in other aspects as well: "Because of [the blueberry trade] a great friendship sprung up among the Indians and Finns around New York Mills. There were no quarrels between us, the Indians telling us that we were the finest people that they had ever come in contact with."[1019] Thus, in villages and towns located near Chippewa Reservations, Finnish communities could come to depend on economically on their trade in blueberries with the Ojibwe. Such

1018 Quoted in Norrgard 2009, p. 33.

1019 Interview with Mrs. Lydia Laine by Runar Gustafson and William Liukkonen in October 5 and 10, 1938, in Duluth, Minnesota. Work Progress Administration Papers, Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota.

dependency could facilitate the forming of fraternal and amiable relations between Finns and the Ojibwe.

Further examination of this case, and its broader implications, falls outside the scope of this research. Yet, the Finnish woman's reference to blueberry trade with the Ojibwe as a basis for the two groups' amiable relations is important in many ways. It points to the material economic and social relationships between the Finns and the Ojibwe, which underpinned cultural interaction between these groups. This challenges the essentializing view that explains proximate Finnish-Ojibwe relations with notions of shared values and worldviews, such as appreciation of nature and mysticism. Moreover, the blueberry case points to the limits of representations and discourses to fully explain the complexities involved in intercultural interactions. This has important implications for the present study. The overwhelming majority of encounters between Finnish migrants and people they considered different in race, nationality or language were, after all, mundane everyday interactions that left no trace on written historical record. The acknowledgement of this fact is of utmost importance if we are to properly explain and contextualize those extraordinary situations where race emerged as a subject of heated debate and a category of great social salience.

Conclusion

During and after the Second World War, the Finnish-American left entered what is often referred to as its twilight years. Partly, this decline was due to government crackdown on radicalism, internal bickering, the loss of members to Karelia and unappealing policies, such as the communist support for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Soviet attack on Finland in 1939.[1020] Many younger leftists also found the emboldened left-wing of the Democratic Party and the CIO more appealing than the organizations of their parents' generation. There were also important social and economic reasons for this decline of the Finnish-American Left. The expansion of public-sector bureaucracy and the white-collar middle class more generally provided new routes for Finnish-American social ascendancy, which made the collectivist and working-class ethos of the aging leftists less appealing. To be sure, Finnish-language leftist newspapers continued to be published in the United States for decades, but they acquired few new readers during the postwar years.[1021]

Studies of immigrants and whiteness often end in the Second World War and the immediate post-war era. It is often held that this was the time when European immigrants finally endorsed whiteness as their primary self-definition. During the war, the

1020 Ahola 1980, pp. 249–255.

1021 Kivisto 1989, p. 72–74. *Industrialisti* was folded in 1975, *Naisten Viiri* in 1978, *Työmies-Eteenpäin* in 1998 and *Raivaaja* in 2009. The only still-existing remnant of the Finnish-American leftist press is the *Finnish-American Reporter*, which is still (2017) published in Hancock, Michigan. It was established in the 1980s as an English-language supplement of the communist *Työmies-Eteenpäin.* Today, it is a monthly publication with no ideological leanings.

males were conscripted in the racially segregated army as white soldiers. After the war, they took advantage of the racialized federal programs, such as the G.I. Bill, and moved to the racially segregated suburbs. They embraced the consumer culture of white America. All this reinforced their sense of belonging to the white side of the American racial divide, and made their ethnic attachments seem inconsequential in comparison. Other historians of American immigration and ethnic history have contested this narrative about the immigrant embrace of whiteness in the postwar years. They point to the continuing significance of ethnic identification in the postwar era and maintain that identities such as Italianness, Jewishness and Finnishness continued to be more meaningful than whiteness for many Americans of European origin.[1022]

Both of these narratives shed important light on the immigrant experience. On the one hand, focus on whiteness calls attention to the shared experiences and privileges of European immigrants which are often left unexamined in studies that treat ethnic groups in isolation from each other and from the broader society. On the other hand, the focus on the continuing significance of ethnicity foregrounds the complexities and inner tensions of whiteness. Still, both narratives often rely on an assumption that ethnic thought can be divided from racial thought. Moreover, it is often implied that racial and ethnic ideas had different geographical and intellectual origins. Racial ideas are associated with American ideologies and social structures, which means that the more Americanized the immigrants became, the more they came to understand themselves as white. Ethnic belonging, on the other hand, is viewed as something more authentically "European"; it was a form of identification, it is held, which emerged from the inner community dynamics of the immigrants and which lived on in their insular cultural organizations. Thus, the more immigrants resisted the appeal of Americanization, the more "ethnic" they supposedly were. The division also has a normative aspect: ethnicity is viewed often in a positive light, race in a negative.

1022 On this debate, see Bayor 2009.

This risks seeing stories of immigrant whitening as morality tales, where initially virtuous, non-racially thinking ethnics become corrupted by endorsing American race categories. This framing has allowed many European-origin Americans to dodge claims of racism by appealing to their ethnic background: "I'm not White, I'm Finnish!"[1023]

In my study, I sought to complicate this division into ethnic and racial modes of thought. By examining how Finnish radicals' racial thought changed during the early twentieth century, I have illustrated that changes in discourse were related to specific historical contexts; there was no uniform or straightforward transition from ethnic to racial thought, or from Finnishness to whiteness. If race is viewed broadly as an idea about humankind's division into cultural groups with inherent characteristics, it is clear that Finns had been conditioned to think racially already in their homeland. These pre-migration schemas had many intellectual origins: European racial theories, imperial discourses about civilization and barbarity and stereotypes about Jews, Gypsies, Russians and other minorities in Finland. Thus, when Finns arrived in America, they were capable of not only differentiating between putative races and nationalities; often they could also rank them into hierarchies based on their perceived level of advancement. In the United States, this tendency to classify and rank peoples by their putative developmental status was reinforced by nativist discourse, practices of racial management by U.S. companies, media representations of black and Asian peoples and many other factors. Socialist Finns, as I have demonstrated, also drew on Marxist notions on historical materialism and the Darwinist discourse on evolution. Thus, Finnish immigrant thinking on race was formed in a multifaceted process, where ideas with diverse geographical and ideological origin became mixed. The Finnish socialist civilizational mission to uplift the Finnish immigrant folk

1023 These words were exclaimed by a Finnish-Canadian man when he explained to Hunnisett how Finnishness and non-whiteness helped him to "build rapport" with the local Ojibwe in his work as a civil servant. Hunnisett 1988, p. 56.

from their purported slumber in the early 1900s, for example, was clearly influenced by Finnish nationalist ethos of cultural uplift, Marxist progressivism, Darwinist evolutionism and U.S. media discourses regarding immigrant assimilability. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint where the "American" influences end and where the "Finnish," or "European," ones begin.

Indeed, it is perhaps best to abandon the habit of thinking intellectual currents in national terms. As this study has demonstrated, building on previous scholarship on immigrant transnationalism, Finnish socialist immigrants remained in close contact with their compatriot comrades across the Atlantic, which profoundly shaped how they thought about human difference. The traffic of newspapers, publications and people across the ocean brought new ideas to their consumption, but the contacts also encouraged creative cross-border comparisons and analogies. Racial violence in the United States, for example, could be associated with tsarist anti-Jewish pogroms, which cast the purportedly modern and progressive America in the same camp with the reactionary reign of the Romanovs. After the Finnish Civil War in 1918, White violence in Finland and white violence on the streets of Chicago could be viewed as parts of a same reactionary assault on global proletarian progress. Later, the Soviet Union's "progressive" nationality policies were contrasted in the communist press to the United States, where immigrants were purportedly despised and racial minorities violently oppressed.

Cross-border influences did not only come from other Finns in Finland and the Soviet Union. The Indian socialist Narayan Krishna's popular lecture tour among Finnish Americans in 1908, which I examined in chapter 2, illustrates the transnational quality of these socialist networks. Indeed, this cross-border connectedness illustrates well the problems inherent with the ethnicity paradigm in immigration scholarship. Studies within this paradigm often imagine ethnic communities as self-sustaining entities and reduce their outward interactions to a simple tug-of-war between assimilationist and preservationist tendencies. These imaginings have been particularly prominent in Finnish-American studies

where Finns are often identified as a particularly "clannish" immigrant group. My analysis of Finnish-American socialist newspapers, and other sources, foregrounds a much more complex and interactive reality, where intellectual influences were varied and cannot easily be compartmentalized as either "ethnic" or "American."

Just like intellectual currents should not be described in national terms, racial and national thinking should not be viewed as the property of a certain intellectual current or ideology. This study has examined the thinking of *leftist* immigrants for a reason: it challenges the popular conception that national and racial ideologies belong home only with the political right, and that internationalist socialism is anathema to nationalism or racism. As this study has illustrated, most socialists accepted the reality of a world divided into nationalities and races as natural. They disagreed on just how significant these divisions were and how socialists should account for them when organizing, but few denied that they represented a fundamental way in which humanity was divided. Most early twentieth-century Marxists also accepted the anthropological concept of spatialized time: that racial and national groups not only differed in their environmental, linguistic, cultural, or somatic features but also at what stage they inhabited humankind's universal line of history, which progressed from primitive tribes to industrial capitalism – and eventually to socialism and communism.

This conception of spatialized time influenced the early organizational efforts of Finnish-American socialists as they sought to uplift their own nationality from its purported primitiveness. Early activists, like Martin Hendrickson, Moses Hahl, Alex Halonen and others, saw America's Finns as a half-savage people mired in superstitious thinking and unable to control their basest instincts. Widespread alcoholism among Finns was the most telltale sign of this. Their low stage of development made them easy pray for manipulating capitalists, who were able to use ignorant Finns as strikebreakers. To correct this, the socialists mounted an

impressive educational effort, with speaking tours, evening classes, newspapers, publishing houses and even their own college.

The notion of developmental difference informed Finnish socialists' thinking on other national and racial groups in many ways. They could look down on other purportedly less developed European and Asian immigrant nationalities. In the Midwest, they considered the "black" South Europeans – Italians, Montenegrins, Croatians and others – as a more backward group that was prone to strikebreaking. Many also viewed Asians and black Americans as less developed races. Native Americans were usually completely excluded from discussions about industrial society. These conceptions regarding developmental differences could discourage some Finns from co-operating with the supposedly less developed workers, as was the case during the 1916 strike on the Mesabi Range and the early 1930s strikes on the Massachusetts cranberry bogs.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that beliefs about developmental differences between races did not provide a ready roadmap on how to interpret political questions. Some socialists, such as the *Työmies* editor Toivo Hiltunen, insisted on the exclusion of Asians by referring to their supposedly uncivilized culture and servile character. Others, like Ester and Leo Laukki in their defense of Asian immigration at the 1908, 1910 and 1912 Socialist Party conventions in Chicago and Indianapolis, insisted that Asians could be lifted from their cultural stasis by exposing them to industrial capitalism and helping them to organize. Both the exclusionists and the proponents of open immigration usually shared the idea of Asian backwardness (and Western progress), but came to different conclusions as to its political and social implications.

This points to an important implication of my research: race was a resource for both racist and antiracist argumentation. Finnish immigrant leftists thought, spoke and wrote in historical circumstances very unfavorable to "anti-essentialist" thinking on race and nationality. The overwhelming majority of their American and Finnish contemporaries, both on the left and the

right, viewed the division of world peoples into races as a natural fact of the human condition. Most also graded these divisions on a developmental scale. Yet, there was no agreement on the meaning of race or of its social significance. For some, race was an inherent and unmalleable biological fact; others viewed it as subject to cultural change. Some argued that societies should be organized on racial basis; others deemed these divisions wholly irrelevant for social organization. Communist Finns in the 1930s, for example, used the category of race to make decidedly antiracist points about desegregation, civil rights and other issues. On the other hand, their detractors in the conservative and socialist camps mostly used the language of nationality to defend the right of Finns to exclude black people from their halls. Thus, *racial* thinking was not necessarily *racist* thinking. Moreover, ideas that effectively *were* racist did not always necessitate the use of the race concept.

Thus, the set of beliefs that we usually call race cannot be easily pinned down to a single source or origin. It was not merely an American or European concoction. Moreover, it was used by different political actors on both the left and the right, and it could be employed to make both racist and antiracist arguments about the organization of human society. Moreover, it was also a framework employed in everyday practices. This pervasiveness of racial thinking does not mean that racial ideas were beyond history or that they were in any way natural. As Francisco Gil-White has noted, we need not become "analytic naturalizers" even if we are "analysts *of* naturalizers."[1024] However, it is important to acknowledge that racial thinking – the notion that humankind is divided into groups that share inherited characteristics – has been (and is) an extremely pervasive and persistent mode of thinking. In a strict sense, calling this mode of thought "racial" helps to cloud this pervasiveness. It invites the common assertion that criticisms

1024 Francisco Gil-White: "How Thick is Blood? The Plot Thickens…: If Ethnic Actors Are Primordialists, What Remains of the Circumstantialist/Primordialist Controversy?" *Ethnic and Racial* Studies, Vol. 22, No. 5, p. 803. See also Brubaker 2004, pp. 9–10

of, say, cultures or religions cannot be racist since these criticisms do not employ the word "race." This assertion misses that the problematic feature in racial thought is not the word itself. Rather, it is the assumption that the humankind can be divided into groups with inherited and intrinsic mental characteristics. Whether these assumptions are voiced with language of race, culture or ethnicity is less consequential.

Indeed, compartmentalizing race from other forms of ethnic thought, and insisting on its analytic specificity as a concept, can hide from view how pervasive racial assumptions actually are. This point has implications for recent scholarly discussions in the field of comparative race studies. In Finland and Nordic countries, for example, there has emerged a discussion on how to bring Anglo-American theoretical ideas about race, racialization and whiteness into Nordic contexts. This is a complicated conundrum, but it would perhaps be advisable to treat concepts such as race, whiteness and ethnicity as categories of practice, not as categories of analysis. In this way, the Anglo-American folk usage of race and ethnicity would not be viewed as universal. This would also better account for the specific ways in which ideas about groupness and ancestry are articulated in different cultural contexts.

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Above, I noted problems with narratives that simplify postwar paths of European immigrants in terms of their racial/ethnic thinking. I critiqued both the notion that immigrants simply embraced whiteness and the idea that they remained attached to their ethnic cultures. How *did*, then, European immigrants relate to race, ethnicity and nationality in the postwar years? This question falls outside the scope of my study, which is why I cannot offer any conclusive answers to this multifaceted and extremely complicated question. I can speculate, however, on how the radical experience of Finnish immigrants influenced their racial thinking in the postwar era.

Paul Buhle's oral history material on American leftists, which he collected in the late 1970s and early 1980s, offers some clues. He interviewed Finnish veterans of the American socialist and communist movements for his collection, and some of his interviewees touched upon issues related to race. In one interview conducted in the 1980s, a Finnish woman from New York described being a socialist in her youth. When reminiscing on the Harlem of her youth, she censured the New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who served three terms in office between 1934 and 1945, for "sending in the blacks" to Harlem, and bemoaned "the Spanish" who had moved to New York, but, unlike Finns, refused to learn English.[1025] Other interviewees told different stories. One veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade mentions his anti-apartheid activism;[1026] another tells how he defended his Mexican migrant pupils from discrimination as a teacher in California.[1027] A woman from Detroit tells about how her son got bullied in school and in the navy for challenging the derogatory remarks about blacks made by his white mates.[1028]

These snippets can offer only clues about how racial thought of Finnish-American leftists developed in the postwar era. Yet, they clearly indicate that the immigrant experience, or the radical immigrant experience, did not provide immigrants with a ready roadmap on how to interpret questions of race. One interviewee used her radical past as a resource to denigrate newer, non-white immigrants for their purported unwillingness to assimilate. Oth-

1025 Interview with Violet Wainio Bjong by Paul Buhle. 7 July 1984. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

1026 Interview with Oiva Halonen by Paul Buhle. 28 February 1978. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

1027 Interview with [Urho] Tuominen by Paul Buhle. 5 November 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

1028 Interview with Irja Peters by Paul Buhle. 30 July 1983. Oral History of the American Left Collection. Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. New York University.

ers linked their past radicalism with their present-day activism to end injustices, such as the poor treatment of Latino migrants or white supremacy in South Africa. These differing ways to make use of the past point also to the complexity of the past itself. As this study has demonstrated, Finnish immigrant leftists had many different ways to interpret questions related to race and nationality. These different interpretations were not self-sufficient and closed ideas or ideologies. Instead, they were formed in intersections of different intellectual currents, in specific historical contexts. That racial ideas have such complex intellectual origins is not unrelated to their continuing persistance as habits of thought. Indeed, it is because of its intellectual promiscuity that racial thinking, and racism, continue to have such a grip on our minds. Still, race is not an independent historical actor; it persists because it is continuousy reproduced by racially thinking human beings. To better understand this process of reproduction, we need to more fully appreciate its complexity.

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Appendix 1: Labor Newspapers Used as Main Sources

Name	Existence	Place of issue	Peak circulation	Ideology
Työmies ("The Working Man")	1903–1998*	Worcester, Mass. (1903–1904), Hancock, Mich. (1904–1914), Superior, Wis. (1914–1998*)	15,500 (1919)	Socialism (1903–1918), Communism (1918–1998)
Raivaaja ("The Pioneer")	1904–2009	Fitchburg, Mass.	10,000 (1927)	Socialism
Sosialisti ("The Socialist") (1914–1917), *Teollisuustyöläinen* ("The Industrial Worker") (1917), *Industrialisti* (1917–1975) ("The Industrialist")	1914–1975	Duluth, Minn.	10,000 (1920)	IWW
Toveritar ("The Woman Comrade") (1911–1930), *Työläisnainen* ("The Working Woman") (1930–1936), *Naisten Viiri* ("Women's Banner") (1936–1978)	1911–1978	Astoria, Ore. (1911–1930), Superior, Wis. (1930–1931), New York City (1931–1936), Yonkers, NY (1936–1950), Superior, Wis. (1950–1978)	14,000 (1932)	Socialism (1911–1918), Communism (1918–1978)
Eteenpäin ("Forward")	1921–1998*	Worcester, Mass. (1921–1931), New York (1931–1936), Yonkers, NY (1936–1950), Superior, Wis. (1950–1998*)	10,987 (1930)	Communism
Toveri ("Comrade")	1907–1931	Astoria, Ore.	5,600 (1923)	Socialism (1907–1918), Communism (1918–1931)

Source: Auvo Kostiainen: "Finns." In Dirk Hoerder (ed.): The Immigrant Labor Press in North America, 1840–1970s: An Annotated Bibliography. Vol 1. Migrants from Northern Europe. Greenwood: New York 1987, pp. 214–215, 226, 228–229, 231–232, 234.

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Aleksi Huhta: Toward a Red Melting Pot: The Racial Thinking of Finnish-American Radicals, 1900–1938
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European and World History

Abstract

This dissertation examines the racial thinking of Finnish radicals in the early twentieth century United States. It studies how and why Finnish radical immigrants used racial ideas to describe and explain human difference. It also examines how and why Finnish thinking on race changed during this time. The study focuses on the time period between 1900 and the late 1930s. During these years, Finns formed one of the largest immigrant groups in the Socialist Party, the IWW and the Communist Party. Yet, the extensive research on the U.S. Left's troubled relationship with race has largely ignored these immigrant radicals. Studies on European immigrants' racial thought, on the other hand, have often not paid due attention to radical immigrants' ideas on race. The main sources for this study are six Finnish-language labor newspapers that were published in the early 1900s in the United States. The present work also makes use of non-fiction books, memoirs, pamphlets and other printed material that was written by both Finnish and American radicals in the United States.

This study is premised on the notion that race is a product of history, not of nature. It is a historically constructed set of beliefs about the humankind's division into groups with inherent and intrinsic mental characteristics. The study maps how ideas about race were expressed, debated, questioned and contested in the Finnish immigrant press. Racial ideas are analyzed as pro-

ducts of interactive and political processes, not as closed ideological constructs. The cross-border character of these processes is emphasized.

The study contributes to Finnish-American historiography, migration history and studies of race and ethnicity. First, this study challenges the well-worn idea that Finnish immigrants were a particularly "clannish" immigrant group. The study will illustrate that their political concerns and activities went well beyond their ethnic community and that their thinking drew on varied intellectual influences. Second, this dissertation asserts that European immigrants were active agents in the construction of racial knowledge. They were not simple conformers to American racism. Finally, the study illustrates that Finnish-American racial thinking drew on a variety of intellectual sources, including Marxist notions of historical development, Darwinism, media's lynching coverage and the Communist Party's antiracism. This has broader implications for studies of race and ethnicity. It challenges the notion that race and racism have a single source or origin (for example, racial science or colonial encounters). This study contends that race has a more complex intellectual history, which also goes to explain its continuing pervasiveness and mutability.

Keywords: Finnish Americans, immigration, racial thinking, ethnicity, radicalism

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Abstrakti

Tarkastelen väitöskirjassani amerikansuomalaisten radikaalien rodullista ajattelua 1900-luvun alun Yhdysvalloissa. Tutkin, miten ja miksi suomalaisradikaalit käyttivät rodullisia ajatuksia kuvaamaan ja selittämään ihmistenvälisiä eroja. Olen myös kiinnostunut siitä, miten ja miksi suomalaisten rodullinen ajattelu muuttui tutkitulla ajanjaksolla. Keskityn tutkimuksessani 1900-luvun alun ja 1930-luvun lopun väliseen aikaan. Suomalaiset olivat näinä vuosina eräs suurimmista siirtolaisryhmistä Yhdysvaltain sosialistisessa ja kommunistisessa puolueessa sekä syndikalistisessa Industrial Workers of the World -järjestössä. Suomalaisia ei ole kuitenkaan juuri noteerattu siinä laajassa tutkimuskirjallisuudessa, joka tarkastelee amerikkalaisvasemmiston ongelmallista suhdetta maan rotukysymyksiin. Viimeaikainen tutkimus eurooppalaissiirtolaisten rodullisen ajattelun muotoutumisesta on puolestaan usein unohtanut poliittisesti radikaalit siirtolaiset. Tutkimukseni pääasialliset lähteet ovat kuusi suomenkielistä työväenlehteä, joita julkaistiin 1900-luvun alun Yhdysvalloissa. Työni käyttää lähteinä myös aikalaiskirjallisuutta, muistelmia, pamfletteja ja muuta suomalaisten ja amerikkalaisten radikaalien julkaisemaa painettua aineistoa sekä siirtolaisten parissa tehtyjä haastatteluja.

Tutkimukseni ymmärtää rodun historian, ei luonnon, tuottamaksi kategoriaksi. Määrittelen sen historiallisesti rakentuneeksi uskomukseksi siitä, että ihmiskunnan voi jakaa ryhmiin, joilla on

perittyjä ja sisäsyntyisiä henkisiä ominaisuuksia. Tutkimukseni selvittää, miten rotua koskevia käsityksiä esitettiin, miten niistä väiteltiin ja miten niitä haastettiin suomalaissiirtolaisten parissa. Tarkastelen rodullista ajattelua interaktiivisena ja poliittisena prosessina, en suljettuna ideologisena järjestelmänä. Korostan tutkimuksessani sitä, että rodullisia käsityksiä luoneet prosessit olivat ylirajaisia.

Tutkimukseni merkittävimmät tulokset liittyvät amerikansuomalaisten historiaa, siirtolaisuutta sekä rotua ja etnisyyttä käsittelevään tutkimukseen. Ensinnäkin tutkimukseni haastaa sen usein esitetyn käsityksen, että suomalaiset olisivat olleet erityisen nurkkakuntainen siirtolaisryhmä. Osoitan, että suomalaiset pyrkivät poliittisessa ajattelussaan ja toiminnassaan toistuvasti ylittämään etnisen yhteisönsä rajat. Toiseksi väitöskirjani tuo esiin, että eurooppalaissiirtolaiset olivat aktiivisia toimijoita rodullisen tiedon tuottamisen prosesseissa. He eivät olleet pelkästään passiivisia amerikkalaiseen rasismiin sopeutujia. Kolmanneksi tutkimukseni osoittaa, että amerikansuomalaisten rodullinen ajattelu otti vaikutteita hyvin erilaisista aatehistoriallisista lähteistä, kuten esimerkiksi marksilaisuudesta, darvinismista, lehdistön lynkkauskuvauksista ja kommunistisen puolueen antirasistisesta retoriikasta. Tällä tutkimustuloksella on laajempia implikaatioita rodun ja etnisyyden tutkimukselle. Se haastaa usein esitetyn käsityksen siitä, että rodullisen ajattelun tai rasismin alkulähde olisi jäljitettävissä johonkin yksittäiseen alkuperään, kuten esimerkiksi rotutieteeseen tai kolonialismiin. Tutkimukseni perusteella ihmisryhmiä tyypittelevällä ajattelulla on huomattavasti moninaisemmat ja vaikeammin määriteltävät aatehistorialliset juuret, mikä selittää rodullisen ajattelun ja rasismin muuntautumiskykyä myös nykyisyydessä.

Avainsanat: amerikansuomalaiset, siirtolaisuus, rodullinen ajattelu, etnisyys, radikalismi

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This dissertation examines the racial thinking of Finnish radicals in the early twentieth century United States. It studies how and why Finnish radical immigrants used racial ideas to describe and explain human difference. It also examines how and why Finnish thinking on race changed during this time. The study focuses on the time period between 1900 and the late 1930s. During these years, Finns formed one of the largest immigrant groups in the Socialist Party, the IWW and the Communist Party. Yet, the extensive research on the U.S. Left's troubled relationship with race has largely ignored these immigrant radicals. Studies on European immigrants' racial thought, on the other hand, have often not paid due attention to radical immigrants' ideas on race. The main sources for this study are six Finnish-language labor newspapers that were published in the early 1900s in the United States. The present work also makes use of non-fiction books, memoirs, pamphlets and other printed material that was written by both Finnish and American radicals in the United States.